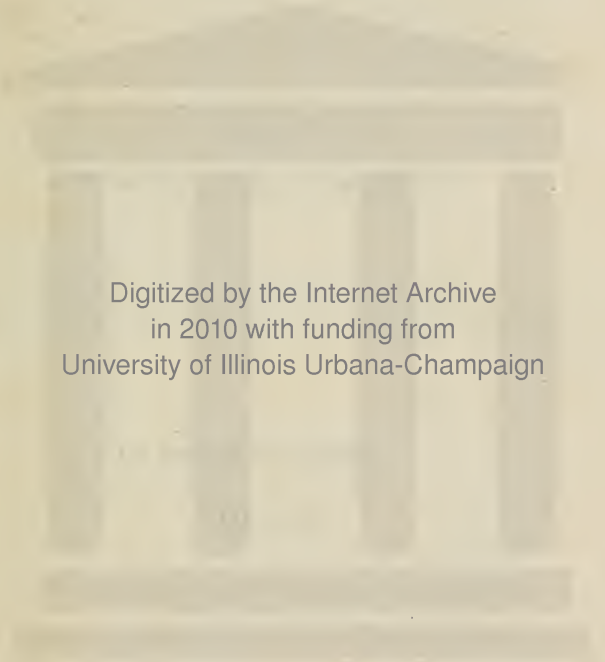


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THE
MARRIED UNMARRIED

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "ALMACK'S REVISITED."

Part good, more bad, some neither one nor t'other.

MARTIAL EPIGRAM.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

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THE MARRIED UNMARRIED.

CHAPTER I.

A sad parting—Some account of a faithful servant, and other twaddle, that will go hard to tire the readers who find no pleasure in such humble matter, and despise vulgar themes—I am doomed to further disappointments, but find comfort from a good Samaritan.

HAVING terminated his letter, my new protector turned to me, and bidding me be seated, said he was ready to listen to my story, and to render me any assistance in his power. I then narrated the events of my life up to the last moment, without concealing anything. He listened with great attention, merely interrupting me now

and then, to ask some passing question. When I had terminated, he said, "Your adventures are singular, and your history interesting. You committed a grievous fault, however, in running away from Thistle-house; had you manfully stood your ground, you might have been able to prove your innocence, but, by flying away, you allowed judgment to go by default, and in criminal as well as moral jurisprudence, the absent, though innocent, are always confounded with the guilty. You have done nothing to forfeit the support of your mysterious guardians, and you have the strongest claims upon that of Lord Eaglehurst. Take my advice then; write without loss of time to both, and in return for the signal service you have rendered me, I shall be glad to afford you shelter until their answers be received."

I gratefully thanked him, followed his advice, and wrote, not only to the Earl, and to XX, according to the address given to Mr. Birchell, but sent a copy of these letters to M. de Florennes. These communications were each backed by a few words from Mr. Rightford, and with a heart full of hope and cheerfulness, I looked forward to better days, and a restoration to character and tranquillity.

Whilst my kind counsellor was sitting con-

versing with me, his son entered with a packet of letters in his hand, and with a voice evidently affected by some deep emotion, said, "The post has brought me intelligence, sir, that will, I fear, give you pain. I am sorry to say, my dear father, that I shall be obliged to leave home, and that immediately."

"It is indeed painful news, my dear Edwin," replied the father, "but in the noble profession which you have selected, you must be prepared for that submission to worldly orders, which, through a long life of trial, I have learned to yield to those emanating from a higher source. I trust, however, that your absence will be only temporary, and that you will obtain leave to return shortly."

"I fear not, my dear father," rejoined the other. "Our separation will be for a long time. God only knows how long. Our regiment has suddenly marched from Winchester to embark at Portsmouth, for foreign service. All officers are ordered to join without a moment's delay."

Mr. Rightford changed colour at this intelligence. A tear stood in his eye, and, for a while, he was too much overcome to speak.

"Well, well," said he at length, "God's will be done! My journey through life has been crossed with many trials, and I have bowed with

resignation, if not with fortitude, to the decrees of Providence. I was wrong, perhaps, in permitting you, my only child, my dear-loved boy, the consolation, pride, and happiness of my old age, to embrace a profession where you were liable to be taken from me—liable to all the dangers and vicissitudes of war and climate. But since you are a soldier, the duty of your calling must be performed: and although, by your absence, I lose the only remaining joy of my declining life, I must not rebel against the consequences. But,” added he, fondly clinging to the ideas of a man of peace, “is it not possible to procure an exchange? Money and interest can do anything.”

“Exchange!” replied the son; “what, my dear father! do you so far mistake my principles, can you so far deviate from your own noble, patriotic sentiments, as to advise me to shrink from my duty at such a moment? can you propose that I should desert my comrades when they are about to embark for service? O never! never! I should otherwise be unworthy of your esteem, unworthy of your affection, and forfeit my own good opinion, and that of my superiors. Let us not think of the anguish of parting,” continued this high-minded, gallant youth: “let us rather anticipate the joy of

meeting at some future time, when your son will, I trust in God, return to your arms, still more deserving of your affection. Then, dearest father, I can honourably exchange, or resign, if you desire it, and pass the remainder of my life in that dear home—of which,” added he, pressing the old man’s hands affectionately to his lips, “I perhaps never felt all the value until this moment, when I am called upon to quit it for a distant clime.”

Mr. Rightford for a moment silently pressed his son in his arms, and then meekly said, “I stand rebuked—you are right, my dear child—your sentiments are the echo of your noble character. Forgive your old father’s weakness. I will pray for strength of mind to support this separation, and night and morning invoke divine grace and protection upon your head.”

“O sir!” answered the son, “that Power, to whose interposition you have often told me, you are indebted for so many favours—He through whose protection you were united to my dear mother—He who has made you the father of the poor, the friend of the rich, the beloved of your family; He will bless you with lengthened years. To me, home is a paradise, and you, dearest father, the idol of the sanctuary: neither one or other will ever be absent from my thoughts.

We shall meet again ere long——but I have no time to lose : I must be gone this evening ;” and leaning his head upon the old man’s shoulder, his overflowing heart gave way, and he wept.

It was a beautiful sight to look upon these two generous, virtuous men. The one in the rich bloom of youth, his noble countenance sparkling with the bright lustre of ripening manhood, the spirit of his clear dark eye, tempered with filial grief ; his noble figure, his raven hair, contrasting with the aged frame and silvery locks of his venerable father, who, as he pressed his son’s head to his bosom with one hand, raised up the other towards the portrait of his wife, and with uplifted eyes, and quivering lips, appeared absorbed in silent prayer. How this scene touched my heart ! how it made my soul languish for such tenderness as animated these two ! how I envied the son in possessing such a parent, and how I respected the wise father for rearing such a son ! I had seen the agony of widow Penguin at the loss of her husband and son ; but her sorrows were tinctured with material suffering ; here the whole source of grief was moral—unallayed—pure as parental love, that purest of all sentiments implanted in man’s heart. I had been deeply affected at my foster-mother’s expressions of affection towards

her children after the shipwreck, and envied them; but I was then too young to comprehend the sublimity and intense beauty of those sentiments, where every cause tends to produce mutual confidence and reciprocal esteem. The scene before me was of this latter kind, and made me feel, with greater intensity, my own bereavement.

Whilst the family were occupied in preparations for the departure of the soldier, I strolled through the adjoining grounds. It was lecture day, as well as that appointed for the distribution of fuel at the vicar's store. As the applicants passed onwards, they showed an air of neatness and humility far different from what I had seen at the Devon overseer's house. I approached the door, and then I heard the worthy pastor expounding portions of the scriptures, simply explaining each passage and summing up the practical duties connected with them. The audience listened with devout attention, and, by the expression of their features, appeared to derive satisfaction, as well as knowledge, from his words. When they had done, a hymn was sung, and then, such as had any slight request to make for medicine or counsel, received attention and relief. They separated pleased and contented, and I returned with the good man to dinner.

It was a sorrowful meal; all hearts were depressed: the soldier tried to master his feelings, that he might not augment his father's grief; the parent struggled hard to subdue his emotions, that he might not discourage his son—but the food he had blessed was ever and anon bedewed with his tears, and seemed to suffocate rather than to afford him pleasure. The lawyer vainly strove to raise a joke, and good-naturedly talked of the healthy country to which his friend was going, of the glories of war, and the certainty of promotion; yet nothing could dispel the gloom, and we rose speedily, for the post-chaise, which was to carry the son to his destination, was heard approaching, and I withdrew, to avoid intruding upon their parting moments.

In the passages, all was bustle and confusion; the hall was strewn with trunks and packages, and the servants performed their duties as though they had been preparing for a funeral. Tears stood in their eyes, for they all loved him, and looked upon him as their child. They had fondled him in his infancy, sported with him in his boyhood, and served him with faithful ardour in his manhood. With the exception of the faithless Sally, the rest had been in Mr. Rightford's service ever since his marriage. They were of that superior class of servitors, which,

perhaps, can be only found in Great Britain : a class who are careful, intelligent, honest, respectful, devoted to their master's interests, and as much attached to the honour of a long residence under the same roof,—to a residence often extending from generation to generation, from youth to decrepitude,—as soldiers are to protracted service under the banners of their country. Thus they become identified with the house and soil, and by their integrity and admirable conduct, reflect as much honour upon themselves, as upon those they serve. The old housekeeper, who had been Edwin Rightford's nurse, was deeply agitated : the usual bustle of her character was subdued. She said she felt as she did upon the day when the hearse drew up to convey to its last home the remains of her beloved mistress ; and, in despite of her sorrow, she rated one of the servants for irreverently flinging down ' Master Edwin's ' hat-box, as if it had been the coffin that contained those precious relics. The nursling seemed to repay her love with filial reciprocity. As he came home from bidding adieu to the out-door servants, and to some of the neighbouring cottagers, he met the old dame in the hall, and putting his hand round her aged waist, and imprinting a kiss upon her brow, said, " Well, God bless you,

dear mother, for such you have been to me ; when I am gone watch over my dear father ; try to console him for my absence, and when he's sorrowful, tell him I shall soon return—think now and then of me.”

“O Master Edwin ! that I will, night and morning,” replied she ; “and do, dear, wear flannels, and mind you change your wet stockings, and don't be proud, but put on worsted—there's a bottle of ointment in your canteen, it's capital for bruises ; and don't stay out late at night without a handkerchief round your throat. I've put up two new comforters in your small port-manteau : and don't eat unripe fruit, there's a dear—and mind, if you feel a little bilious, always take three grains of calomel, with something nice in the morning. And do mind about damp sheets—there's farmer Norton's son, that was a soldier, got the rheumatics for life along with them. You can always find a warming-pan, no doubt, at any of the inns abroad.”

The soldier smiled at this catalogue of remedies from the single-minded, affectionate old dame, and promising to attend as far as possible to her directions, replied—“I am sure you'll not forget my pensioners in the village, or my dogs. My father kindly said, that Grim and Day-star shall become parlour boarders.”

“ Dear me ! they’ll dirty the furniture sadly,” retorted the dame, with the instinctive feeling of her calling, and perhaps jealous of those favourites being taken from her care : “ don’t you think they’d be more comfortable in the housekeeper’s room ? Poor blind Robert shall make baskets for them, and I can feed them myself—feed them, nurse them, love them for your sake, as I would feed and nurse you, to my dying breath,” said the old lady, bursting into tears.

Edwin Rightford once more pressed the faithful creature to his bosom, and hastened into the library. What passed there I know not ; but in a few minutes more, the door opened, and I caught a glimpse of the venerable pastor upon his knees. The soldier hurried forth, uttered an agitated farewell to the weeping by-standers, shook me by the hand, then springing into the carriage accompanied by his cousin, in another moment was upon his road to court the dangers of that service, where, alas ! honours are not always for the brave, recompense for the most deserving, or gratitude for the most generous.

Of the latter noble quality, I, in a few minutes, received a striking proof. As soon as the domestics, who lingered about the door, to catch a last glimpse of the departing vehicle,

had given vent to their first emotions, the house-keeper called to me, and placing a letter in my hand, said, "Master Edwin bade me give this to you, and if you'll come up to his room—only wipe your shoes first—I'll shew you the things. Dear me ! all his beautiful new clothes—to go and give them away, it's such a pity ! But he'd give the heart from his body, that he would, to those that want. Just like his dearmother: I've known her refuse herself a new winter pelisse, and she so chilly, that she might spend the money in blankets for the poor. Dear me, I wish Master Edwin had a taken James ; he's quite a pattern, and keeps the pantry so tidy, and is quite respectful with the maids, and has an excellent recipe for cleaning plate, and never hardly meets with a misfortune in breaking, only now and then a glass, which may happen to the carefulest ; especially with them spider-legged, new-fangled glasses, that was invented a purpose, I believe, to perplex poor servants."

Whilst the old dame was muttering forth this monologue, I opened the letter, which contained a bank-note for twenty pounds, accompanied by the following words :

"Dear Sir,—You have rendered my family a service, for which I have no means of requiting

you adequately. From all that my father has told me, as well as from your own conversation and manner, I feel convinced that you are a gentleman born—not only in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but in your sentiments and feelings. I have therefore the greater scruple in begging your acceptance of the enclosed trifle, which I trust you will consider in no other light than as a feeble proof of my gratitude, and desire to serve you. I have also a tolerable wardrobe, now of no use to me, which my father's housekeeper will place at your disposal. In making use of it, you will render my old friend a great service, and spare her the trouble of defending my property from her old enemies, the moths.

“Your very grateful, and obliged, E. R.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the dame, “that’s just like him, a careful dear! I’ve more trouble with them moths than with all the rest of the family. It’s no use trying pepper, morocco leather, and such like; the nasty things, they’ll get in, nibble nibble, spoiling every thing. I wonder what God Almighty made them for: I’d a beautiful fur tippet, that my dear mistress gave me on Master Edwin’s first birth-day, twenty years come next tenth January; and I laid it by for

a whole twelvemonth, and then put it on to go to church, for it fell upon a Sunday; I was rather late that day, having had to make up some medicines for Mrs. Carter's children, who lay ill of typhus, and didn't look to it, and just as I got to the style near the church, Jane Cook put Master Edwin upon my back, and do you know when he got down, Jane Cook says to me, 'Lauk a mercy! Mrs. Stillwell, I beg your pardon, but your beautiful nice tippet's for all the world like an old mangy dog's back—it's all along of the moths, depend on it, ma'am.' So I took it off, and there it was, nothing but skin and bone, as a body may say, without a morsel of fur left, only just one or two patches: and sure enough Jane Cook was right, it was the nasty moths. I've got it still though, for it's quite a curiosity; besides, having been given to me on Master Edwin's birth-day, I wouldn't part with it on no account; there's no knowing what use it might be turned to.

"But here," continued she, as we entered the young officer's bed-room, "here are the clothes and linen, and you can take what you please. It does go to my heart though, to see a thing touched belonging to him."

"I shall not touch them," replied I, "my wants are few, and I trust that in a few days, I shall

be enabled, through other means, to clothe myself, and repay this money."

"That's very proper of you," answered the old dame; "do you know I can't bear to part with a rag belonging to them. There's the little chamber mistress used as her dressing-room. It's filled with her things, all of them, down to the very pins she wore the last day before she took ill—left, as she left them, in her worked cushion. She bequeathed all to me—but I wouldn't remove one thing for the love of heaven. I dust them, air them, and count them over, just as I did when she was living. All I have, I owe to them—all I have, I'll leave to them; and if, please God, I live to see Master Edwin comfortably married, I'll return all to his lady. There," continued she, unlocking the door of a small cheerful apartment, and speaking in a subdued voice; "there are her gloves, the pen she wrote with, and a note half finished, and there's the book of God open, as you see, at the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians: the last words she uttered were from the fifty-fifth verse. There's the print of her beautiful figure still upon the cushion of that arm-chair, just as it was when we lifted her from bed upon her death-eve, that she might look once more upon the green fields, and the flowers in her garden, and

listen to the birds she had so often fed with crumbs. Ah! I see her now as she sat there, her gentle eye raised towards the heavens, where she is now among the blessed; and as the summer sun fell upon her countenance, she seemed like one of the angels one reads of in the Bible. And there's the stain of her tears upon Master Edwin's miniature, done when he was a rosy, beauteous cherub, but two years old, with Come-voo, her favourite pug-dog on his lap.*

“It's a great favour I've done, in showing you this room, for it's always locked, only when master wants the key. He sits here for many a long hour, thinking, no doubt, of the joyful days he passed with that good angel, who made his home like heaven. But there's his bell, it rung twice—that's for me. I'll have tea ready presently, and then I'll tell you more about mistress and Master Edwin. And hadn't you better take two or three shirts and stockings, and let your own be washed and mended? I'll look to them myself.”

She now attended her master's summons, and I saw nothing more of her, until the family were called to prayers. This duty over, Mr. Rightford renewed his offers of service to me,

* Probably a corruption of *Comme Vous*, a common appellation for pet dogs in France.—*Note of Editor.*

and I retired to rest, full of admiration and respect for this good man.

Two days were passed tranquilly ; my host asking me many questions, and examining me in books and other matters, many of which I had, however, forgotten from long disuse. I had leisure also to observe the tenderness with which the old man clung to every little object that reminded him of his son ; and how affectionately his mind was occupied with that one engrossing subject. The miniature shown to me by the housekeeper, was taken from its sanctuary, and placed upon the desk at which he wrote. Grim, the favourite terrier, was called from the stable, and with Day-star, a noble deer hound, of that fine Highland breed which Scott has more than once immortalised, were allowed to occupy the hearth-rug, or to ensconce themselves in the arm chairs. Some landscapes, drawn by the accomplished soldier's hand, were suspended above the fire-place ; and a walking-stick, which he had amused himself with carving, became the constant support of the old gentleman's physical body, as was the son the sole prop of his moral existence. If the winds rocked the neighbouring trees, or boomed in moaning gusts through the chimneys, he trembled and seemed as much alarmed as if he

had seen the vessel which transported Edwin's battalion in danger of destruction. Twenty times he examined the weather-cock, tapped the barometer, and referred to the almanack, and then sought ease for his overflowing heart, by dwelling upon the excellent qualities of his beloved child. As I had never known the endearments of a parent, and was little acquainted with the world, I could only think of the happiness of being the son of such a father.

The third morning arrived, and I waited with intense anxiety the announcement of the post. It brought letters for Mr. Rightford, but none for me: the fourth came, and the same disappointment was my doom. The fifth arrived, and upon the bag being opened, I saw a packet with the Salisbury post-mark, and recognised the handwriting of my old pedagogue: my heart beat violently at this, and a foreboding of some new misfortune crossed my mind, and caused me to turn deadly pale. Mr. Rightford broke the seal, and read to me aloud the following lines from Mr. Birchell.

“ Thistle-house, January 1806.

“ Sir,—I have the honour to return the enclosed, Count De Florennes having quitted

England some months past, for the north of Europe. In reply to your questions respecting Peregrine Penguin, I regret to say, that his conduct, whilst under my roof, was far from meriting my approbation. I am bound to declare, both as a magistrate, clergyman, and head of an important establishment, that I consider him of an artful, designing, and dishonest character, with a mind perverted by early bad habits, and with many vicious and immoral tendencies, of which it would be unnecessary for me to enter into details. The fact of the robbery was proved upon such palpable evidence, that it left no doubts upon my mind or that of my brother magistrates; and I regret to add, that the members of my family, as well as several young noblemen and gentlemen committed to my care, had strong grounds for attributing other acts of a similar nature to his agency; *Quam prope ad crimen sine crimine*. Mr. Nibshort, of whose integrity and honest character I have no reason to entertain any doubts, having quitted my establishment, to undertake some extensive speculations in America, I shall therefore move no further in the business: I am bound, however, to put you upon your guard against the person for whom you are interesting yourself; especially as I

have received a communication from the Rev. Dr. Scentwell, which leaves no doubt upon my mind that a youth committed by him to Reading jail as accessory to a murder perpetrated in the neighbourhood of Windsor-forest, is the same individual who, conscious of his guilt, fled from my establishment, (*qui male agit, odit lucem*,) then connected himself with a gang of gipseys and poachers, and made his escape from the constables at Wokingham, since which time he has not been heard of. Such being the case, I am convinced that your sense of duty to society, and that respect which we all owe to the laws, will point out to you the urgency of taking measures to place the person in question in safe custody, warrants being out in Berkshire, as well as in this county, for his apprehension. I ought likewise to add, that although professing the outward forms of our excellent worship, I believe him to be a rank papist in his heart, a circumstance that will, doubtless, have its due weight with so distinguished and devoted a servant of the church as you have the reputation to be.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very faithful servant
and colleague in God,

T. BIRCHELL."

“ P. S. You appear not to be aware that my noble and very respected friend, Lord Eaglehurst, has been appointed governor-general to a distant part of the empire, and that he and his family sailed for their destination last week. The life of Lord William Toryville was certainly saved by the exertions of young Penguin, but an act of that kind, however meritorious, cannot be taken as a bill of indemnity for such charges as those that hang over him.”

I watched with intense anxiety Mr. Rightford's countenance, as he read this letter, and was so overcome, that I could scarcely prevent myself from falling. At length, I threw myself upon my knees, and assuring him of my innocence, and of the veracity of every word I uttered, I implored him not to abandon me to eternal disgrace and misery. He paused, looked with complacency upon me, and said, “ Poor lad ! I pity you with all my heart. From me you are safe ; I will not repay your generous devotion by ingratitude ; I will not follow the advice of Mr. Birchell ; I know my duty to the laws ; I know also what is due to Christian fellowship and humanity. Much as appearances may be against you, I believe you innocent. It is most unfortunate that Lord Eaglehurst

should have quitted England; the secluded life I lead, and my utter inattention to politics, and worldly matters beyond my own parish or immediate neighbourhood, must account for my ignorance of this appointment. You seem destined by fate to be the subject of strange vicissitudes. Do not, however, renounce all hope; be of good cheer, I shall probably hear to-morrow or next day from the person who undertook to protect you, and whose intention it evidently was to provide for you. It is impossible that he can cast you off, without listening to your justification. However, if, against every principle of humanity, he should abandon you, I will put you in the way of gaining an honest livelihood; but your own safety requires that you should not long remain here, unless you think fit to meet the hazards of a trial, which would perhaps go hard against you, without the assistance and testimony either of the Count or Lord Eaglehurst. Mr. Birchell will doubtless communicate the intelligence of your discovery to Dr. Scentwell, and although the former may take no immediate steps against you, I shall be compelled to refuse you protection. I have an acquaintance, a merchant in London, whom, in a moment of necessity, I was enabled to save from ruin. I will endeavour to obtain for you

a situation with him as clerk; by exertion and industry, you may, in due time, amass an easy independence. I would advise you for the present to retain your assumed name of Jessop, as you will thus avoid exposure. You may take such articles from my poor boy's wardrobe as may be necessary for your immediate use, and, as long as I live, I will allow you a small annual sum, which, with rigid economy, will be sufficient for your maintenance. Long experience and severe trials have shown me what can be done by self-denial; God grant that the hearts of your relations, if you have any, may be softened, and that you may eventually be rewarded with better things."

Overwhelmed with mingled indignation at the unfeeling perseverance of Mr. Birchell, and gratitude for the humanity of my kind benefactor, I thanked the latter, gratefully accepted his offer, and withdrew to prepare my little packet for departure, which I was resolved to effect as soon as possible; for I was so alarmed at the contents of Mr. Birchell's letter, that I fancied every approaching footstep to be that of the constables. In the evening, Mr. Rightford wrote to his friend the merchant, who forthwith returned a very satisfactory answer; and, as neither of the two following posts brought a

reply from my guardian, it was decided that the village butcher should convey me in his taxed-cart to Amersham, where I was to take coach for the metropolis.

CHAPTER II.

I meet with a set of Hogarth's prints, which lead to divers luminous reflections upon the part of a fellow traveller—Various specimens of original poetry and quaint aphorisms, which end in my being electrified.

ALTHOUGH sorely disappointed at the ill-success of my letters, I had reason to be grateful for the amelioration that had taken place in my condition. I had now more than forty pounds in my pockets, a good stock of linen and clothes, which, with a little alteration, might be made to fit my person, and, in lieu of being cast upon the precarious patronage of an unknown musician, I was consigned to the care of a respectable merchant, in whose service it might be in my power, by assiduity, to make my way in the world. My adventures during the last twelve-months had taught me to look upon worldly

vicissitudes with more than ordinary philosophy, and to encounter hardships and privations with comparative indifference : so, upon summing up all matters in my mind, I began to think myself quite as fortunate as if I had been sent across the ocean to make my money at the expense of my constitution. And since those who were my natural or legal protectors had abandoned me to starvation, I resolved to abandon all thoughts of them, and devote myself night and day to the establishment of my own condition, a matter which appeared far from impossible according to the account I had read of the large fortunes accumulated by individuals fully as humble as myself.

A trifling incident gave an additional stimulus to this intention. Upon reaching Uxbridge, I entered the inn-parlour, and there, for the first time, saw the prints of Hogarth's apprentices, suspended round the walls. I was minutely examining that which represents, with so much simplicity, chasteness, and force of character, a rich merchant leaning upon the shoulder of the youth, who, by industry and good conduct, had obtained his confidence. I was reading in a half-loud voice, the expressive words of St. Matthew, " Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few

things, I will make thee ruler over many," when my sole fellow-passenger, a jovial, middle-aged looking man, who was assuaging his appetite with some cold meat, exclaimed, "Ah! young man, you do right to study that print; it is done to a turn after nature: there's as much food for the mind in those drawings, as there is sustenance for the body in this round of beef,—a little over-done, by-the-by. Waiter! some red-cabbage pickle,—walnut will do! Yes, sir, as Horace Walpole says,—a quaint fellow that same Horatio—a severe dog in his day—a very devil to find spots in the sun: he'd have picked a hole in the man of the moon's coat, if professor Wilkins had discovered the way to fly there.* Did you ever hear of Strawberry-hill? I've a box within half a mile of it. Walpole knew what he was about when he bought it; got it no doubt for a song—shrewd fellow! Rare gudgeon fishing almost from the windows—a savoury spot—eel-pie island. Give me your Thames eels, I say, as clean and wholesome as young chickens: 'your silvery eel in shining volumes rolled,' as Pope says. None of your heavy-carcassed, Dutch worms, smelling of mud

* See Dunciad, book ii. line 452:—

"The head that turns to superlunar things,
Poised with a tail, may steer on Wilkins' wings."

like a Lombard-street scavenger. This cold duck's delicious. Talking of Pope, did you ever see his villa at Twickenham?"

"I never was in that neighbourhood," replied I, wondering how the gentleman could contrive to eat and talk so much, and so fast.

"Not seen Twickenham! then you've seen nothing, as the Romans say. Well, sir, Pope's villa is close to my box, as pretty a spot as any in all England—made for a poet. Wherries and coaches passing every hour,—new faces, new ideas, floating or rolling by, all day, like figures in a galantee-show. I defy a man not to court the Nine, when he sees 'old Father Thames advancing his reverend head' close under his nose, spangled all over with city-barges and jolly young watermen;—then, when at a loss for a 'speculation,' as the Spectator calls it, why he may down pen, mount a coach, and be upon 'Change in an hour: that is the true *otium cum dignitate*. I dabbled a little in poetry myself. See the first wits of the day at my table: glad to see them, and they glad to come to me. Poets are not like air plants,—can't live without nourishment. Had a turn that way when I was an apprentice: I'll give you a specimen if you like. They are lines addressed to my garden: my wife had them

done in gold letters upon a rustic temple which overhangs the river."

After swallowing the remainder of the cold duck's wing, he spouted the following verses, raising his voice to mark the rhymes, and waving his hand to show the measure:—

"Fain would my muse your fragrant virtues rhyme,
O melons, mushrooms, brocoli, and thyme!
Grapes I would sing, and also boast of you,
Whom some call *cow*-cumber, and others *cu*;
I'd not forget you, lettuce, tied with strips of bass;
Nor you, Spring's dividend, O early grass!
Of peaches, peas, pears, parsley, plums, and pines,
I could say much, but here must end my lines.

"What do you think of that, sir?—quite in Cowley's style—simple and pastoral, yet bubbling over with quaint images. I wouldn't take a hundred five per cents. for the *cu*; and the alliteration in the seventh line, Peter Pindaric to the very marrow: that's what I call minding my p's and q's; good that, very. What's your verdict?"

"I think they are very amusing," replied I; "and I admire very much your idea of nature paying her first tribute in asparagus, as well as your hit at the vulgar mode of designating that vegetable."

"You're right, sir," answered he; "there is

all the moral of the thing. You have no idea of the effect produced in our ward by those lines. There's not a common council-man that does not look two ways before he calls for his cucumber, and if they do ask for 'grass,' they always add 'sparrow' to it; but I'll cure them of that: I'll put salt upon their tails. Talking of tails, bless me, I feel quite inspired when I sit beneath my weeping willow, merrily watching the swans with theirs cocked up in the air, whilst their long necks are grubbing for *animalculæ vagulæ blandulæ* amongst the weeds.* Can't bear to be idle; should never have had a shilling in my pocket, and been as bad as that vagabond apprentice playing at marbles upon the tomb-stone, if I had not been as industrious as a bee, and as active as a grass-hopper. Talking of hopping—rare fun that swan-hopping! Always go up as far as the Bush, at Staines, in the company's barge. Runnymede reminds me of British liberty, and Cowper's hill, of poetry, not to mention Windsor

* We suppose the citizen, who was evidently a man of extensive reading, intended to satirise the famous death-bed verses of the Emperor Adrian, beginning with "*Animula, vagula, blandula*," and which some critics have considered as a very unbecoming piece of gaiety at such a moment.—*Note of Editor.*

Forest,—devilish bad venison by-the-bye in that forest—as rank as whale-oil; ay, everything smells of rank in that quarter;—not bad that, eh? But, as I was saying, I like to uphold the ancient privileges of the corporation: none of your new-fangled doctrines for me. Let well alone, as I told my Scotch gardener, when he wanted to fill up my duck-pond, and convert it into kale beds. I'm fond of ducks, very, and so was Shakspeare: always call my wife a duck. Just after we were married, I made an impromptu upon her. We were down at Greenwich Fair: this inspired me, and I wrote the lines upon the window of the Green Man and Still, with my diamond shirt-pin: I'll repeat them to you if you like."

I thanked him, being much amused with his good-humoured volubility: so, with the same tone and accent, he proceeded thus:—

“ TO MY DUCK.

“ Of all the birds that swiftly skim the air,
Or dive in water, mine's the fairest fair;
Fair is the swallow, which ne'er seems to rest,
And fair the cuckoo, which ne'er builds a nest;
Fair is the nightingale, whose notes are sweet;
And fair the woodcock—O delicious meat!
But fairer far than lark or thrush in cage,
Is that sweet duck whose heart and mind are sage.

“ There ! what do you say to that ?—do you twig the conceit ? The body of an amiable woman filled with wisdom and virtue, as ducks and *cæteris paribus* ought to be with sage,—brilliant and new. I read them to the club—passed them off, at first, for Gay’s, and then won a rump and dozen that they were my own.”

The worthy citizen poet had scarcely finished his speech and his repast, ere the vehicle was ready ; so, calling to the coachman, he said, “ I’ll get outside with this young gentleman : I hate being alone. Waiter ! what’s to pay ? Not bad sherry that ; always import my own direct : stands me in about five shillings, bottled in my cellar. Don’t mind a few pounds for a good thing : pay well, have well, that’s my maxim. Here, you dog, this is a bad sixpence,—help me on with my great-coat, and take the half-pence for yourself.”

When we were once more upon the road, he turned to me, and said, “ We were talking of Pope. Now there’s a proof of what genius and application can do : without birth, fortune, or interest, he rose to affluence and immortality. I should have liked his character better, however, if he had not been ashamed of his humble origin. I see no discredit to a man in having a respectable tradesman for a father, but I do

in his being ashamed to avow it. But most authors, especially poets, are as vain as turkey-cocks, — not without some reason, perhaps, though I say it that should not; for they get spoiled by the world's flattery: besides, sir, all men cannot be poets."

"But they all seem to attempt authorship in some shape or other, sir," answered I: "you recollect Pope's version of the passage from Horace's epistles,

" ' Those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme, and scrawl, and scribble, to a man."

"True, sir," answered the citizen; "but the sacred fire is the gift: *poeta nascitur non fit*, as the Brundusian has it. Egad, if the cursed economists had not abolished Settle's office, I had half a mind to attempt a settlement as city laureat.* But let me tell you, young man," continued he, more seriously, "though all men can't write verses, they can be industrious, honest, and make their fortunes by prose, as I

* This is another of the citizen's waggeries. Settle was, as he said, city laureat at the close of the seventeenth century. After having written for a long time in favour of the popish succession, he turned sides, and contrived the famous pope-burning scene of Nov. 1680. He would have been very useful to the orange-lodges, had he lived in 1836.—*Note of Editor.*

have done—worth a plum, if I'm worth a penny : all gained by industry and honesty." He now paused, took a pinch of snuff, politely offered one to me, replaced his box in his coat-pocket, and continued, " Martinique, sir,—old unadulterated, none of your humbugging mixture at fourteen shillings the pound. I import it direct—stands me in about six shillings. A good thing Mr. Fribourg, *et hoc genus omne*, must make of your West-end bloods. To be sure, tradesmen wait a long time for their money, and have many bad debts ; besides, if men of fashion choose to pay double for that which, by a little trouble and ready-money, they might get for half, it is their own look out : fools and their money soon parted. Let me see, what were we talking of whilst you were looking at the prints ?"

" Of Horace Walpole, sir," answered I.

" True," rejoined he. " Well, then, as I was going to say, Walpole has a smart idea upon that subject. He calls Hogarth 'a writer of comedy with a pencil, and not a painter,'—meaning thereby, that he delineated ordinary life, and filled his canvass with so many faithful images of every-day existence, that his several productions were like scenes in a play, where one sees nature represented *veluti in speculum*,

as the motto over the curtain at Drury Lane says."

Being desirous to show a further proof of my learning, I answered, "There is an image of the same kind in a Latin author, *Mutum est pictura poema*: Walpole probably took his idea from it."

"That does not render it less true," rejoined he. "I don't care a fig where men import their ideas, providing they apply them justly. It's the same in trade: it's of no use to manufacture a new article unless you've a market; besides, he must be a clever fellow who hits upon a new thought now-a-days, though I say it that should not: do you twig? 'Is that sweet duck whose mind and heart are sage.' But I see sir, you are a scholar,—Oxford or Cambridge? I have a son at the latter, who, unless I am wrong in my balance-sheet, will be Lord Chancellor some day. Which of the two do you boast of as your Alma Mater?"

"Neither, sir," replied I: "what little I know I picked up at a private school."

"None the worse for that, sir," answered he. "I was an orphan, and brought up at the blue-coat. If not impertinent, what profession are you in? Nothing like beginning early,—commenced myself at fourteen, as warehouse-boy

to a Turkey merchant;—worked well, slept well: early to bed, early to rise,—never knew what it was to be idle, sick, or sorry;—what spare time I had was passed in reading, what little money I earned, was spent in books and paper,—bought a set of Hogarth's prints at an old stall, took them for my beacon, as the poet says, and was repaid for it,—was made book-keeper, traveller, and confidential clerk,—sent to the Levant as supercargo—saw them pummel figs with their feet at Smyrna, and pummel feet, as if they were figs, at Constantinople: a most matter-of-fact place that,—was nearly being impaled for wishing to put my nose into a mosque,—made an epigram on it on my passage to Corfu, and here it is:—

“ ‘ Shun mosques and maidens, ye who visit Turkey,
Respite finem, too, or else—they'll burke ye.’ ”

A neat hit, eh? Talking of hits, made a good one for myself in Zante currants, returned home, fell in love with my old master's only daughter, and she ditto with me; was taken into partnership, married: he died, she inherited all his property, and here I am at the head of the house of Windfall and Sons, much at your service whenever you want Turkey carpets, opium, figs, sponges, and so forth, or if ever you come

down to see Pope's villa, or fish for gudgeon at Twickenham."

To this I replied, that neither the prints I had seen, nor his own example, would be lost upon me; that I also was, unfortunately, an orphan, and, I believed, going to enter as clerk to a merchant in the same line as himself."

"And who may that be?" demanded he.

"Messrs. Figmat and Co., of Lothbury," answered I.

"Figmat! zounds! my near neighbour; an honest man, and warm too; but a devil of a whig, and worse, if possible—a most sturdy matter-of-fact caitiff. He cares no more for church and king than he does for Parnassus and the peerage, and thinks no more of Pope's villa than of the pope's vatican: smart that, eh? We have often had a set-to at Guildhall, and when he gets the worst of it, he imitates gentlemen in another place, as they say in parliament, and, for want of logic, tries to cough me down; but I don't care an old sponge,—wrote an epigram upon him t'other day—cured his complaint: here it is:—

" ' You'd think from Fico's boisterous cough,

His lungs were racked with pains :

You are wrong, my friends, they're strong enough—

His catarrh's in his brains.'

As neat a squib as ever was fired upon the fifth of November."

We had now arrived at that part of the road where the traveller first catches a view of Hyde Park, the long line of beautiful mansions that terminate with Apsley-house, and the distant Surrey hills. I could not refrain from uttering an exclamation of surprise and admiration: upon which my companion said, "Have you never been in London?"

"Never, sir," replied I; "but, from the endless chain of buildings through which we have been passing, I should have thought we had already reached the heart of the metropolis."

"Pah, sir! this is only the country.

" ' Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,
Tight boxes, neatly sashed, and in a blaze,
With all a July sun's collected rays,
Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air! "

Bitter that, but not mine: Cowper was in the market before me."

"That may be, sir," answered I; "but I am not surprised at London being called the queen of cities, if these are the steps to her throne."

"Good that, very—ditto, poetical. Apropos

of queens, I'll tell you a conceit of a literary friend of mine upon that subject. One Sunday I invited a party of wits, at least they were all authors, to fish for gudgeons at my box. Amongst them was a French emigré, who was boasting, as usual, of the grandeur of Paris, and sounding the *rs*, as if a Cheapside watchman's rattle had been grinding in his throat. 'Ah! ah!' said he, 'you talk of London—London very fine when you can see; but Paris—peste!' Why the deuce, by-the-bye, must Frenchmen always swear by the pest?—they never had the plague there, and we have. 'Peste!' added he, 'Paris is the queen of cities.'

" 'I should say the quean, sir,' observed one of my wits, a dry fellow, who has written three farces and a melodrame for Sadler's Wells.

" 'If I might be allowed to make a comparison,' said a second, whose novel, called 'Vauxhall Slices,' was looked upon as the best hit of the year—'If I might be allowed, I should call London the stern and imposing lord of brick and mortar, and Paris his coquettish plaster mistress. But here we are at the turnpike—must make a call at the West End—shall be glad to see you, when shop work permits, at No. 77. Will show you my collection of poems and Dutch bulbs, a present

sent from my worthy correspondents Van Pompe tot Meerdebroeken and brothers, of Haarlem. Do my business with them and other parts of Holland and Germany in Kniphausen bottoms. Lucky little fellow that count. Has not got a cock-boat of his own, and scarce land enough to grow potatoes to feed a pig, but lends his flag to carry on trade with all the large states. Queer dog that Bonaparte, to give him the monopoly.* Remember all I have said about Figmat—a word to the wise—do you twig? hand me my stick—good that;”—and so saying, he descended, paid his fare, and after replying to the coachman’s “please to remember,” by “I shall never forget, when you drove the Twickenham, your having spoiled my best silk umbrella, by poking it into a basket of tripe,” he gave him sixpence, and turned down Park-lane.

When we continued our progress towards the city, it was nearly three o’clock. About the hour when the din, the movement, the traffic and brilliancy of a London day attain their zenith. As I gazed down the long, wide street

* We conclude the citizen alluded to the permission given by Napoleon to Count Bentinck of Kniphausen, to lend his flag to Dutch and other vessels, which thus enjoyed a kind of neutrality.—*Note of Editor.*

before me it seemed as if London had poured forth its whole population. As far as my eye could reach, the sides were darkened by interminable streams of pedestrians moving to and fro in dark and waving lines like columns of West Indian ants. In the centre, hundreds of brilliant equipages, and gay cavaliers, passed, crossed, and traversed: their noble horses, glittering harness, splendid liveries, and hurried pace, contrasting gaily with the dingy, motionless string of hackney coaches which separated them, as the dorsal fin upon a fish's back divides its glittering scales. The wind blew freshly from the west, repelling the smoke and vapours of the city. The sun gilded the windows and buildings with its unusual rays, giving additional lustre to the shops, which appeared like some gigantic eastern bazaar, and not the every-day display of the Leviathan of cities. My head was at once bewildered and delighted with what I saw, and it was with no small regret that I descended from the roof when the coach drove into the Spread Eagle.

Mr. Rightford had warned me of the dangers that young strangers were exposed to from sharpers and other rogues upon their first arrival in London, and I therefore followed his advice, and sent for a coach to convey me

and my small stock of luggage to Lothbury. Whilst I was waiting in the coffee-room for the arrival of the vehicle, an elderly gentleman with spectacles, and powdered wig, and an air of great respectability, came in, and, after asking some questions relating to the coaches, called for a sandwich and glass of sherry, and placed himself at the table where I was sitting.

“A fine day for travelling, sir,” said he, after examining me for a few seconds. “A little dusty, as appears by your toggery—fresh from the country, I suppose. I am going there, myself, to breathe a little pure air, and obtain a short relaxation from business. May I make bold to ask whence you come?”

“From the neighbourhood of Amersham, sir,” replied I.

“From Amersham!” said he, starting. “Indeed! A most shocking murder that, committed down there t’other day, by the same gang, no doubt, that tried to rob the parson. I believe they nabbed one of the rogues. Caught him like a fish. A very clever trick. Did you hear if the fellow turned king’s evidence, and gave any clue to the murderers?”

“I believe not, sir,” answered I.

I thought I saw him smile at this, and nod his head, but this must have been a mistake, for

he rapped the table with his hand, and said gravely, "More's the pity; such cold-blooded scoundrels ought not to escape the gallows."

"They probably will not, sir," rejoined I, "for the name of the murderer is known, and the Buckinghamshire magistrates are acquainted with all the particulars."

The gentleman took a pinch of snuff, looked hard at me, and said, "Indeed! I should like to know the villain's name."

"His name, sir, is Martin, or the Schoolmaster; and as his leg was broken by a fall from his horse, we shall probably soon hear of his capture."

"You seem to know so much, sir," returned he, drawing closer to the table, and looking round cautiously, "you can perhaps tell me who were his associates, for the papers say there were three highwaymen."

"There were, sir. One was called Silver Bill, and the other Black Ned. I should know the latter anywhere."

"The devil you should!" answered he; then he added in a whisper, "I may as well tell you at once that I am a Bow-street officer, and going down upon this business to Amersham: if you can furnish me with information that will help me to lay hands upon the rogues, I shall

get the reward, and will go halves with you, if you will give me your name and address."

Thinking that if I said anything, I should expose myself to that discovery I was so anxious to avoid, I answered, that I was much obliged for his offer, but could give him no further information.

"O! that chaffing will not do for us, young man," replied he; "you said you could tell Black Ned anywhere. You must have seen him. Egad! I have my doubts that you belong to the gang; so if you do not tell me the truth, I shall find it my duty to take you to Bow-street:" and upon this he put his hand into his breast-pocket, and showed the silver-crowned emblem of his office.

This menace alarmed me so much, that I thought it prudent to comply. I was about to commence, when a second person entered, and after examining me attentively, joined us; the police officer then whispered a few words in the new-comer's ear, and then said to me, "This is my brother runner: so you'll choose between coming with us, or putting us up to trap."

Upon this I narrated to them as rapidly as I could all I knew respecting the robbery and murder, as well as the manner in which it had come to my knowledge, and ended by saying

that my name was John Jessop, and that my address would be No. 41, Lothbury. They now rose, looked at me, as I thought, with no very friendly air, and after consulting between themselves in a low tone, said, "If you wish to keep yourself out of quod, young flunky, you'd better put a tether on your patter. We shall have our eye upon you; for mayhap you'll be wanted." Then bidding me significantly a good afternoon, they departed.

There was something in the voice and manner of the elder police officer, which struck me as those of some one I had seen before. But I could not recollect where, nor was this of any importance; so in a moment more, I jumped into the hackney coach, which had long been waiting, congratulating myself at escaping from his hands, but regretting my imprudence in having so incautiously entered into a conversation with a stranger.

The emotions of my heart upon this day, were not yet, however, at an end. As the vehicle slowly wound its way amidst the maze of carriages, carts, and stages, which always throng this crowded portion of the metropolis, its progress was suddenly impeded by the wheels of a gentleman's chariot having been caught by those of another going in an opposite direction, so

that when we arrived at their side, we could neither recede nor advance. That nearest to me appeared to belong to some nobleman, from its coronet and supporters. Two ladies were inside, who, either accustomed to such misadventures, or bearing them with more than common philosophy, sat back and tranquilly awaited until the servants and by-standers had disengaged the wheels. At length one of them leaned forward, and looked out upon my side. If the electricity of a thousand galvanic batteries had been levelled against me, I could not have been more powerfully agitated. I literally shrieked with mingled surprise and emotion—it was the beautiful face—the lovely form, of Lady Delphine Toryville.

CHAPTER III.

In which I am introduced to my new master and his family—A description of them—Figmat's opinions upon business, politics, and matrimony—An allegory is introduced by Figmat, which he declares might be studied by members of parliament, common council-men, political dinner attenders, and all persons addicted to public speaking—He preaches, but does not practise.

ERE I had recovered from the effects produced by the beautiful vision which had thus unexpectedly flashed across me, the coach reached Mr. Figmat's abode, where the driver gave a rap as loud and aristocratic as if I had been one of the sheriffs. This honour was not, however, intended to be conferred gratis; for before the door could be opened, he demanded half a crown for his shilling fare, and seeing that I was ignorant

enough to comply, asked for another sixpence to drink my 'honour's health.' Not succeeding in this attempt, he contemptuously cast my luggage upon the top of the house-steps, shut up those of his vehicle with a fearful clatter, climbed upon his box, and swearing I was only a seedy bag's-man, and that I and my fig-drum might go to the devil, he drove off, to the no little amusement of my future master's foot-boy, who by this time, had answered this authoritative, 'Open, Sesame.'

"Yes, and if you're the young man which I suppose you are, master won't stand your making such a lord mayor's rattling at his door; it will set him a coughing properly. He don't like to hear no noise but his own," said the lad, in answer to my question, if Mr. Figmat was at home, and if he expected any one from the country.

"I reckon," continued he, as he left me, to remove my package within the narrow dingy passage, dignified with the name of hall, "you are rather of the raw order, or you would have known that rings is for servants, messages, and such like; single raps for tradesmen, clerks, and what not, after counting-house is shut up; two thumps for postmen, three knocks for mer-

chants, lawyers, and gentlemen a-foot—three small taps and a thunderer for master's friends as comes in jarvies, but such rowdy-dows as you made on't, is only fit for lords, city members, aldermen, bankers, and great folk that drives in their own carriages, with footmen behind them."

I had scarcely time to beg pardon for the coachman's transgression, and to plead my utter ignorance of the hierarchy of knocking, when a voice from the top of the stairs cried out, "James, who was that who came with a knock as long as an attorney's bill, and what do you stand talking there for? Bring up dinner—it's five minutes past the half hour; I'll send you and the cook off at a moment's warning, if I am kept waiting—Andrew Figmat is like time and tide, he waits for no one."

"I beg pardon, sir," replied the servant, as he hastened down stairs, "it's cook's fault—I've been ready this half-hour; besides I thought by the knock that it was a alderman's carriage, and so I stopped to put on my best jacket, as missis told me always to do for doubles—but it's only a single——"

"What do you mean?" demanded the other.

"Why it's nothing but the young man from the country, and that's his fault."

"Confound your fault," answered Mr. Fig-

mat, "bring up dinner and the young man, directly."

"And mind you pull off your best jacket, James!" exclaimed a female voice, "and tell the young man to wait in the back parlour, and not to come up the front stairs—the covering is not upon the best Turkey."

"I hope the sausages are done my dear," replied the gentleman, as with great gallantry he walked down stairs before his wife, and entered the small parlour, at the door of which I stood. After much the kind of salutation that he would have given to a sample of damaged rhubarb, which I returned with a respectful bow, Mr. Figmat fixed his small, grey, penetrating eye upon me, and said, "John Jessop, I presume?"

"That is my name, sir, and I trust that I shall be enabled to repay Mr. Rightford's and your kindness—(here the worthy Andrew gave two or three loud coughs)—by a constant devotion to my duties and—(here he chimed in with at least a dozen more)—by my punctuality and attention to business, I hope in due time——" The fit of coughing now redoubled, and completely drowned my words; so, remembering what Mr. Windfall had said, I took the hint, and cut short my discourse: this had the effect of a most emollient medicine.

Finding that I remained silent, he answered, "I am a matter of fact man, and of few words; brevity is the soul of all business, except that of lawyers. It's better we should understand each other at once—short reckonings make long friends—I hate long-winded speeches."

"So I heard," replied I, "from Mr. Windfall, whom I met."

"Then you met the greatest ass between Temple-bar and the Tower-hamlets: wonder he has not been in the gazette before this with his confounded gibberish and poetical trash—thinks himself a great man, because all the dinner-hunting scribblers at the West-end eat him out of house and home, and then laugh at him and his verses by way of striking the balance. I know them, sir—a needy, jealous, back-biting race—lampoon their hosts as soon as they have swallowed their port and claret, and would pound each other as flat as Smyrna figs, if they thought any of them wrote better than themselves, which luckily, they have too much vanity to admit. The only objection I have to the diffusion of knowledge, is all this washy trash, it turns all the women's heads—won't let a novel or scrap of poetry enter my house—if women want to read, let them study the Tutor's Assist-

ant, Mrs. Glass's Cookery, Underwood on Children, the Housekeeper's companion."

"Sir, dinner's been on the table these three minutes," exclaimed the foot-boy, approaching his master with a dirty napkin tucked tightly under his arm, like an opera-hat; "and missus desires me to say, the lamb's fry will grow into mutton kidneys, if you don't come."

"Tell your mistress, you insolent dog, not to send you with stale jokes, borrowed from that fool Windfall," replied Andrew: then turning to me, he continued, "But to the point; you need not make any profession, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: Mr. Rightford's endorsement is sufficient—I would trust him as I would the Bank—I wish all his cloth were like him; acts and not words with him—that's the way to do business—saved me from ruin when my banker failed—gave me time to look about, and I repaid him, interest and capital, to a moment. All I have is at his service—glad he has afforded me an occasion to oblige him. You'll have bed and board in the house; I like the sample, but remember, handsome is, that handsome does—as few words as possible, if you please—a short grace and a warm place, that's my rule."

I thanked him in two words, and hinted that I should like to perform some slight ablution before sitting down. This had nigh set him a coughing again, but he lifted up the lid of a sort of small stand, which concealed a few washing utensils, and said, "I like cleanliness, but I hate foppery, or dandyism, as they call it now-a-days; a wisp over, and that's enough. Egad! more time is lost by men of business in tying their cravats, and settling their waistcoats, than would serve to keep the accounts of their firms; I never wish to see a bit of starch east of the Bar. If merchants' and bankers' hands are always occupied with their dress, they must keep other fingers to write for them.—Are you ready? pull up the plug, that saves slops and housemaids. I am my own valet, and all I want is, Mrs. Figmat to put me out a clean shirt, stockings well darned, and then, one, two, three, with a sharp razor, and I am ready for 'Change: but we must not keep the lamb's fry waiting, punctuality is the key-stone to prosperity;"—and so saying, he led me into the front dining-room, and introduced me, first to his wife, and then to a young lady whom he called his daughter; adding, "She is the only thing that ever made me commit a pun in my lifetime, for I think our language was made for us to interpret our thoughts, not

to puzzle our hearers;* I will give it you, however."

"Figmat" exclaimed the lady, "I will thank you for the gizzard wing of that boiled fowl; and pray spare us your pun, we have heard it as often as Bow-bells."

"A good thing loses nothing by repetition," replied the husband, as he placed the wing upon a plate, and then continued, "Seventeen years ago, last fourth of October, I was driving my wife in a one-horse chaise out in the country, when she was suddenly taken ill, and I had scarcely time to carry her into a small inn, and place her upon a sofa, ere that little creature made her appearance—so I determined to christen her Sophy. She's my only child, and that's my only joke—a very pretty pair of twins."

Although I could not agree with him as to the merit of one of his productions, I did most cordially in that of the other. It was indeed difficult to behold a sweeter face than that of my new master's daughter. Her eyes were of a deep,

* This opinion is in direct opposition to that of a celebrated diplomatist, who said, that "speech was given to man to disguise his thoughts." His excellency must have cribbed this notion from the celebrated line in the fourth book of the *Æniad*—" *Punnica se quantis attollet gloria rebus !*"

mild blue; her forehead was lofty, and full of intelligence; her hair was dark, and fell in glossy ringlets upon shoulders that were fair as the most transparent alabaster. Her features were oval, her mouth small, and filled with teeth of crystal whiteness. Her cheeks, which were tinged with a slight colour, were rendered more expressive by two dimples, and her head was set on with that peculiar bend which is rarely to be found even amongst those of highest blood. Her figure was well rounded, and her waist small; she sat low, but stood above the ordinary height: and had a foot, which, if it had been treated with common justice, or handled by a French shoemaker, would have been remarked, even upon the Alameda of Seville, or the Prado at Madrid. To this she added a kind of innate, elastic grace, in all her movements, which it is scarcely possible for women to obtain by art. I have often watched her, but never could detect an attitude that betrayed an approach to an angle. It was the sweeping, waving motion of the drooping willow, fanned by the breeze.

I could not help turning my eye from her to her parents, to whom she bore no more resemblance than the free-limbed desert courser to a Suffolk punch. Figmat himself was short, lusty, and high-shouldered, with a coarse, but

good-natured face, small twinkling eyes, a low broad forehead, indicating shrewdness and calculation, but none of the nobler sentiments which one traced in the lineaments of his child. He had, moreover, a large purple-tinged nose, which mariners might have taken for Black-nose Point, whence the worthy merchant received his choicest raisins.*

His wife had little the advantage of him, either in looks or manner. She also was as round, and nearly as dark skinned as the succulent Sunday fare, which foreigners suppose to be the only gastronomic production, except roast beef, that good old England can boast of. There was nothing angular about her either; but this proceeded from an exuberance of person, that gave to her body the appearance of an O placed between two circumflexes. A staircase of chins, to the uppermost of which some depilatory powder would have been useful, kept up a communication between her bust and her wide mouth, above which her nose upreared itself, as if it held the rest of her person in

* Cape Kara-burnou, upon the southern side of the Gulf of Smyrna, celebrated for the growth of those fine grapes, which reach England in the shape of raisins, and form one of the principal objects of the Levant trade.

sovereign contempt. If Nature, which usually proportions the limbs to each other, and to the divers functions they have to perform, had adhered to its ordinary practice, in the structure of Sophia's mother, her legs must have been fitted for drogers' masts. Of this, thank God, I know nothing; but I now and then caught a glimpse of her foot, and took especial care to avoid being trodden upon. The impulsive weight of the monkeys employed to drive in the piles of London Bridge would have been less overwhelming.

What a strange, incongruous thing is the human heart! Mine was still vibrating, from the sight of the only being who had ever caused me a moment's emotion—whose image was not only interwoven with all my dreams of human perfection, but whose existence was perhaps connected with my future fate: and yet I could not refrain from regarding with a very strange kind of sensation, the beautiful maiden who sat opposite to me. It was most natural, after seeing Lady Delphine, whom I thought was far across the waters with her noble father, that my only thought should have been, how I might gain access to her—not for the purpose of adding fuel to my insane love for one of her exalted station, but to obtain intelligence of her

father and brother, and perhaps to implore her and them to interest themselves in my favour with those who had placed me at Thistle House. Reason and common sense, backed by the observations of Mr. Rightford, told me that these latter persons must have some direct or indirect interest in my existence: and that if they had not replied to my letter, it must have been the result of accident, and not caprice. To seek them out, was therefore a paramount duty. After rescuing me from the workhouse, and giving me a good education, they surely would not condemn me unheard, or cast me off as no longer worthy of protection. Singular as it may appear, all these thoughts were for a while driven out of my head, by the sight of Figmat's charming daughter: and, when I recollected the story conveyed by Hogarth's admirable pencil, and remembered what Mr. Windfall told me of his own success in life, I fancied that, by similar good conduct, I might attain similar success, and perhaps become the husband of the lovely Sophia, and the inheritor of her father's property. Such was the superlunar reverie in which I was plunged, when Mrs. Figmat, seeing that I had scarcely touched a mouthful of the viands before me, brought my thoughts to more substantial images, by saying,

“The rule in this house is, not to take more on your plate than you can eat, Mr. Jessop: taste, but not waste. Perhaps it is not to your liking; young folks, now-a-days, are as dainty as sick canaries. There’s the last footboy we had, left to better himself, because he was not contented with boiled mutton, without caper sauce.” Mr. Figmat here threw in one of his signal-coughs, but she heeded it no more than the captain of a three-decker would the whizzing of a musket-shot; indeed, it only served to make her more ill-humoured. “You are a stranger, and a charity orphan,” continued she, “and since Figmat has thought proper to take you into his house, which is more than he would do for his own nephew, I expect you will conform to our habits and hours. You’ll excuse my frankness; but beggars must not be choosers.”

“Madam,” replied I, blushing at this unfeeling and uncalled-for speech, “I will do my utmost to please you in everything; I could live upon a crust, and am accustomed, from childhood, to hard fare, and harder usage: therefore, you must not attribute my want of appetite to daintiness, but to emotion at your goodness, and gratitude to Providence for

having placed me beneath your kind roof.
I——”

Here Andrew burst into such an immoderate fit of barking, that I really thought this time he had met with the same accident as befel the celebrated hunchback; but Mrs. Figmat, no-ways alarmed, availed herself of this opportunity to observe, “It would be vastly wicked if you were not thankful; but I’ve no faith in gratitude: the kinder one is to clerks and servants, the worse they behave. Didn’t Robert Stretcham, our confidential warehouseman, whom we took from Christ’s Hospital, run away to America, with a thousand pounds? and have I not been robbed and cheated by cooks and maids, that I have taken from Paul’s and other charities? Ay, it’s always the case: directly you teach them their business, and have made useful servants of them, then they rob you without warning, or give you warning, in order to rob others. But I’ll take care it does not happen again; I’ll not leave a crumb in their way, and won’t take one that has not a three years’ character.”

“Will you let me speak for once, Mrs. Figmat?” roared out the husband, in a husky voice.

“ You do nothing else, my dear,” replied the wife ; “ I won’t be coughed down by you or any man—I will be mistress in my own house : and if you think proper to bring in charity people from God knows where, to bed and board with us, like your own flesh and blood——”

“ You are enough to make flesh and blood turn into fire and flame,” exclaimed the husband. “ I hate long speeches ; but where would you and I have been, were it not for the Rev. Edwin Rightford’s kindness ? God bless him, say I. Sophy, my darling, give me the port—Jessop, fill your glass : here’s the health of your benefactor and mine—may he soon be a bishop, and may all bishops serve God and man as he does, though I believe he’s a rank Tory in his heart. Hark ye, John Jessop, I am a man of few words, as I said before--what are your politics ?”

“ I really——”

Here he cut short my intended profession of utter ignorance in such matters, by one of his catarrhal vollies, and proceeded : “ I really don’t care what your politics are, providing you keep them to yourself. Every man is at liberty to vote according to his own conscience, and to think as he pleases. Truth and independence ! that’s my maxim ; but my humble opinion is,

that no man can honestly vote for a Tory administration: they have had the trade in their hands so long, they think it belongs to them as their birth-right; they hand places, pensions, and reversions from one to another, from father to son, from uncle to nephew, as mason's labourers toss up bricks. The Commons' House of Parliament is but a shadow of the Lords; there is no more independence there, than in the divan of Ali Pacha—all sinecure and corruption. They vote away the public money by bushels, as if gold flowed in from the New River water-works; what do they care for that? John Bull must pay, or go into the gazette: and the cunning dogs know that English patriots would sooner starve themselves, than refuse to support their country's credit; but that can't last till doomsday—must wind up our accounts in the long run. It's an abomination to see the money, wrung from the pockets of the people, sent across the water, to subsidize Russians, Prussians, Swedes, Austrians, Spaniards, and Portuguese, who have not a groat to repay us with: and to support tottering monarchs, that have not strength enough to keep their crowns upon their own heads."

"I've a dreadful pain in mine, Mr. Figmat," said my mistress, who was thumping the

carpet with her foot, producing a sort of noise, not unlike that of the marble governor, when he comes to sup with Don Juan: "I wish you would speak a little lower—remember, you are not upon the hustings."

"I wish I was! I'd tell the people my opinion," answered he, raising, instead of abating, his voice, "I say that the English government will never do its duty towards the country, until it allows foreign nations to cut each other's throats as they like, and choose what kings and form of government they please; we have got enough to do at home, without meddling with other people's affairs. Didn't we kick out those weeds of Stuarts, and plant a Dutch bulb in their place? Why shouldn't the French import their own goods, if there be any good in such commodities? We lost America by our confounded bad government, and pig-headed obstinacy—we shall lose Ireland by the same want of skill, if we do not look sharp. If we are to subsidize any body, let us give our money to Bonyparte, and leave the bigoted old Bourbons to shift for themselves; I'll stake my life they've not gained wisdom from adversity: they'll be at their old tricks, if ever they get back again, and then come whining to

England, to help them out of the scrape, or throw her over if they stick fast. Boney has got sense enough in his noddle to know, that if we took him into the firm, no country would dare show its face in the market. D—n it, sir! such a joint-stock company, as ‘George, Boney, and brothers,’ might cork up the whole world like a jar of raisins. Our sailors, and their soldiers, and a fig for the rest of Europe.”

“Papa, dear, will you give me one of those by you?” said Sophia, who spoke for the first time, and cast an arch look upon my features, which she saw were distorted with my attempt to suppress a yawn.

“They are bad for your beautiful white teeth, my pet,” said the father, who seemed to love his daughter with great tenderness, and, in fact, to listen to no one else. She spoke rarely, but when she did, Figmat seldom interrupted her, and she had, moreover, the good sense to take a hint at his first cough. “They’ll ruin your pretty mouth, my pearl: and i’faith, they’re nasty things. If you were to see the filthy old women at Smyrna kneading them into the drums with their naked feet and hands, you would throw them out of the window. But what do you say to leaving Jessop and me to finish our wine together? I must explain his

duties to him, and we will then go up stairs for a cup of tea."

The ladies rose, and I ran to open the door, where I was rewarded with a kind look from Sophia, whilst Mrs. Figmat waited behind to lock up the sugar and preserves, and then, with the tea-caddy in one hand, and a jar of pickles in the other, proceeded to the kitchen in order to scold the cook for having boiled potatoes enough, as she said, 'for all the Irish papists in St. Giles's.'

When they were gone, Figmat drew his chair close to the fire, and bidding me be seated, put his feet upon the fender, gave a cough, as a signal for me to be silent, and then explained what my duties would be in his counting-house:—adding, with more good-nature than I anticipated from his manner, "Be diligent, sober, and punctual; I won't say honest, for to recommend honesty upon first introduction is to suspect knavery. Little beginnings often produce great ends. Up hill at first, brings down hill afterwards. Egad! when I was a boy, the sight of a ledger put me into a cold fever. My uncle, Jonas Figmat, to whose business I succeeded, used to pull me by the ear to work, like a pig to the trough: but when once I took a liking to it, he was obliged to haul at my tail to

get me away. A good man uncle Jonas—one of the old school—staunch as his credit. As honest an old Whig as ever voted in the Court of Aldermen. Might have been in parliament, if he had chosen to pack up his conscience, and consign it to ministers. He produced more reform and economies into the corporation than all his brethren ever did, or perhaps ever will: for five out of six are rank Tories, and they can only fatten on rank grass. Proud as peacocks upon 'Change, but get them amongst a pack of lords, and you'll see them bob and cringe like Mansion-house beadles at the lord mayor elect.

“ But there is time enough for you to think of these matters. All I require from you is, punctuality, submission, and orderly conduct. Mr. Rightford says that you are a scholar, and good accountant. With a little attention, you will soon become master of your business, and if you behave to my satisfaction, you will lay out your time to good interest. Little by little, birds build their nests, and before you are as old as I am, you may have feathered yours. The grace-cup, if you please—let us drink, ‘ The ladies.’ I never exceed my pint; half that quantity is enough for you. Good port that, as ever was imported: none of your poisonous sloe-

juice, which is all we get by the Methuen treaty."

Having finished his glass, he bade me lock up the decanter in the cellaret, and take the key to his wife, adding, "She is supercargo over all my household concerns, and providing you wipe your shoes, taste without waste, keep your room tidy, never go up the front stairs, pay attention to all her little whims and wishes, and hold your tongue when she scolds, you will, no doubt, find favour in her sight, and lead a happy time of it. She is an excellent woman—rather too fond of reading the slip-slop in the Morning Post about great people's balls and movements. Thinks the West End is the garden of Eden, and that Sophy ought to marry a duke or a marquis. And let me tell you, the man that gets her, be he peer or commoner, will be a lucky fellow. No nonsensical stuff of love and romance in her head. She is as good as she is beautiful—she is dutiful without hypocrisy—religious without superstition, and virtuous without prudery. She loves her old father better than herself, and knowing I am a man of few words, never makes long speeches. She will have all I possess some day, and Andrew Figmat passes for a warm man. I don't care to bias her selection, or any man's politics: but if I could find a

young fellow of independent principles, my way of thinking, line of business, and tolerably well to do in the world, she and I would take him into partnership; for she don't care to whom she consigns herself, providing I approve of the invoice. If he had talents and was likely to serve the good cause, we'd soon get him into parliament, and thus make borough-mongering corruption serve as an instrument to its own reformation. I see, by the attention you have paid to my few observations, that you are a young man of sense and discretion: I was sure Mr. Rightford would not recommend you if you were not. Diffidence and silence are as essential to youth, as conciseness and precision to old age. I can tell you a story connected with this subject, which I heard related by a Turkish tale-teller at Cairo.

“In a certain city of the East, the habit of prolixity had become so prevalent, that half the citizens died of pulmonary complaints, whilst the rest yawned themselves to sleep, waiting their turn to speak. Business that might have been transacted in the divan, or in the bazaar in a few minutes, was thus protracted for months, and even years, so that public affairs were delayed, commerce ruined, and before an ambassador could obtain an answer, he often died, and

ere a vessel could get her freight, her timbers rotted from the length of the ministers' or merchants' preliminary discourses. The old king, having worn out his lungs by a three weeks discussion with the vizier, as to the propriety of his accepting an invitation to dine with the cadî, died. His son, who was a bit of a reformist, and had the misfortune to stutter, in order to conceal his own defects, and to put an end to this waste of time, issued an edict, declaring that all business throughout his dominions should henceforth be transacted by signs, under penalty of having the tongue cut out."

I was thinking to myself, that it was fortunate my master did not live in this king's dominions, and was nearly following the example of the sleepy portion of his subjects; an inclination which I betrayed by a most unmannerly yawn, when Figmat, perceiving my mouth open as wide as that of the lion at Exeter Change, and my eyes as invisible as those of a mole, gave a tremendous cough—a figure of speech which served the double purpose of silencing his adversaries, and arousing their attention. It had the desired effect upon me, for I opened my eyes and shut my mouth, and he proceeded: "There happened to be a young man in that city, of great abilities, but no interest, a com-

mon case in our own times, who wished to obtain a place in the Treasury. He presented himself before the divan for this purpose, but the vizier, who coveted the situation for a nephew, pretended there was no vacancy. To explain this, the old rogue made signs for a glass of water, and filling it to the very brim, placed it upon the table; then pouring in another drop, it naturally overflowed. This manner of demonstrating the case, and getting rid of the applicant, was greatly applauded by the king and divan: but the young man, nothing daunted, made signs for another glass, and likewise filled it to the brim. Then taking from his bosom a rose, he plucked off one of the leaves, and laid it upon the water, where it floated without causing the glass to overflow. This ingenious repartee so delighted the silent king, that in defiance of his new edict, he stammered out “A-a-a-a-li K-k-kerim,” beckoned to the youth, and instead of the office he applied for, appointed him precis writer to the reis effendi.”

I thought it prudent to appear extremely pleased with this allegory, but only expressed my feelings by smiling, nodding, and muttering a compliment. Upon which my master added, “You are right—there’s *multum in parvo* in

that, sir; and the commons'-house, and common-council would do well to have it inscribed in golden letters upon their walls. I would recommend it also to be read from the chair at all public meetings and dinners, where it is the fashion, now-a-days, for men to talk of nothing but themselves, and to waste precious time in praising their now conduct, or that of their party. Divest their speeches of all that has reference to their own virtues, sagacity and wisdom, and they would then be reduced to a reasonable length. Speeches should be valued like Dutch ducats, not according to their size, but according to their intrinsic worth and purity."

As my master here paused, I thought to please him by observing that it was recorded of the celebrated Phocion, that he was so concise in his own speeches, and so great an enemy to prolixity in others, that Demosthenes seeing him approach one day, exclaimed, "Here comes the pruner of my periods." And when Phocion was asked one day why he appeared so absorbed and pensive upon mounting the rostrum, he replied, "I was thinking whether I could not shorten the speech I had to make to the Athenians."

"A d—d sensible fellow, that Foshon," replied

Figmat, slightly coughing, "and you are very wise, for recollecting so useful a hint. But I have an engagement at Lloyd's at half-past seven, shall be back punctually at half-past eight, and in the meantime, go up and take the keys to Mrs. Figmat."

Honest Andrew then called for his hat and umbrella, and remembering my mistress's injunction, I ascended the back stairs, sneezed loudly, that she might be aware of my attention to her decrees, and having reached the sitting-room door, rapped, and when I was bid to enter, took care to let her see me wipe my shoes upon the sheep-skin rug. This was not lost upon her; for, as she nodded and pointed to a chair, I heard her whisper to her daughter, "A nice young man!" a compliment to which the lovely Sophia seemed to respond, for she cast upon me one of the sweetest and most gentle smiles I had seen in all my life.

Women are naturally curious and inquisitive, and Mrs. Figmat was not without a superabundant share of these characteristics. Indeed, when one considers the manner in which I had become an inmate of her family, it is not surprising that she was desirous to ascertain something of my antecedents. Her manner of endeavouring to elicit this from me, was not the

most delicate or encouraging, and I more than once saw Sophia's cheeks tinged with blushes, as the mother applied some humiliating question; or, in return to my replies, jerked out reflections of an equally ungenerous nature. Thinking myself justified in concealing such portions of my history as might be disadvantageous to me, I told the truth, but not the whole truth; at which, however, she seemed tolerably well satisfied. Indeed, after I said that I should ask permission from Mr. Figmat to call upon Lady Delphine Toryville, and that I had the honour of being well known to her father and brother, which brother's life I had saved, her opinion of me seemed to improve. She condescended to say, that to be the friend of a peer's son, I could be no ordinary person—gave me some excellent maternal advice about taking care of my dirty linen, and the no less dirty ways of London, and trusted me so far as to observe, that I might “sugar myself” at tea. When the early bedtime arrived, she kindly led the way to the little attic, that was to be my future resting-place, and bidding me put out the candle before I got into bed, and not to splash the walls when I washed in the morning, left me to meditate upon my future prospects, and to fall

asleep, with the image of the gentle Sophia resting upon one eye-lid, and that of the graceful Lady Delphine moving before the other.

CHAPTER IV.

I dream a dream, but do not follow the advice of Epictetus, who quaintly observed, "Never tell thy dreams; for, although thou mayst take great pleasure in narrating them, others will receive no pleasure in hearing them"—A disquisition upon love at first sight, and other matters thereunto appertaining.

ACCUSTOMED to rise early, but unused to the dark and murky atmosphere of the city, I awoke before what, in pastoral language, is called "the lark," but which, in London, might be more aptly termed "before the black-bird" or "sweep." My night had been agitated and feverish; so I got up, and stood at the window, sighing for that kind of glimmering, which, in London, is misnamed "daylight." What hour it was, I knew not, until the drowsy note of the watchman informed me that it was only five; and, as I had neither candle nor dressing-gown,

I thought it best to return to my bed, where, at length, I again fell into a restless slumber.

Methought I was at Windfall's villa, near Twickenham, contemplating the beautiful river, upon the bosom of which there floated a noble pageant, like those one reads of during former days;—presently, a boat, rowed by watermen with rich tabbards and armorial badges, detached itself from the rest, and approached the bank: in it were seated Lady Delphine Toryville and another lady, who possessed remains of great beauty, clouded by an expression of an unamiable and haughty character. The former stood up, waved her hand, invited me to join them, but called me by an unknown name, but which I thought I had somewhere heard before. I hesitated: but the invitation was repeated in a voice so kind and thrilling, that I sprang into the boat, and seated myself beside her;—she then threw her arms round me, and embraced me as the saviour of her brother and herself, and added, that, as I had given her life, that life was henceforth mine. In an ecstasy of joy, I pressed her to my throbbing heart, and, weeping with emotion, I asked her why she called me by a name that was not mine,—to which she answered, “It is your own—your father’s.”

Here her companion frowned, and haughtily bade her not descend to such familiarities with an unknown orphan; but the kind maiden clung to me the more. Suddenly there was a loud roll, like thunder; the other boats and barges disappeared, and we were left alone upon the stream, of which I could no longer see the banks;—then there arose from the waters a pale and livid figure, resembling Sophia, and she cast herself between us, and, encircling me in her icy arms, tore me away, and threw me backwards beneath the rowers' feet; then, raising her fingers towards Lady Delphine's face, a frightful change—a sudden blight came over the latter,—her visage swelled, her dark and lustrous eyes seemed encircled by rings of flame—her ruby lips and raven hair were instantly blanched, her figure drooped away to decrepitude, and she became as one disfigured by a leprosy;—I strove to rise, but the waterman held his foot upon my chest, and then, grasping me with both his hands, whispered in my ear, “I am thy evil genius,—look on me!” I did look: it was Nibshort; and he grinned upon me with a frightful sneer. Suddenly two of his companions sprang from their seats, seized me, gagged me, and, at his bidding, cast me headlong into the stream. As I sank, I

heard a scream from Lady Delphine's elderly companion, who shouted in a loud voice, "Monsters! my son! my son!" I shall never forget that scream, those words, nor the features of her who uttered them, and yet, by a strange contradiction, I vainly endeavoured to recal the name by which Lady Delphine addressed me.

There was no link between this horrid vision and the next: all vanished as the cold water flowed over me. By a transition quicker than the sun's rays, I found myself amidst a crowd of masks and grotesque figures in the once-glorious city of the doges. I stood in an open spot, surrounded with noble edifices, watching the mummeries of the midnight carnival. Suddenly, every light was extinguished, darkness came over all, and a heavy tempest poured down,—the joyous crowds were put to flight, and I took shelter beneath some neighbouring columns;—then a masked female came up to me, and put her arm round me, and invited me to follow her; I repulsed her with loathing; but she held me fast, and, taking off her mask, showed to me the lovely face of Sophia, more beautiful than ever; but I heeded her not, and tried to fly: 'twas vain: she held me with an iron grasp, and said, "Have you forgotten the vows you plighted in my dying mother's pre-

sence?" Then I heard clashings of swords, and, turning round, I saw a man, already passed the prime of life, but of noble figure and commanding air, combating with two others. In these assassins, I recognised the runners I had met at the Spread Eagle. Although unarmed, I darted from the embraces of Sophia, and cast myself between the combatants, and the two turned upon me, and I felt the cold steel of their swords penetrate my body : as I fell, they fled.

Rapid as thought, the scene changed. I lay upon a sick-bed with priests around me, and behind them stood the tall figure, to save whose life I had risked mine, and the priests told me that I was dying, but that I could not hope for salvation hereafter, unless I abjured the Protestant faith, and embraced that of the Romish church. But I refused, and strove to turn from them, and the tall man advanced, and cried out in Italian, " Abjure, abjure, heretic ! or a father's curse be upon thee, thou traitor to thy faith and country." To which I replied, in the same language,* " I have no father, nor can

* It is recorded that some German students were reposing at a mill, when they heard the proprietor distinctly reciting some passages from Homer in his sleep. When he awoke, they complimented him upon

you be my parent, or you would not invoke maledictions upon a child who saved your life, for dying stedfast in the faith in which he had been reared; a father would not urge his son with curses to apostacy: it is against God and nature;—if you are my father, give me your blessing.” And his better feelings prevailed. Putting aside the groups of monks and friars, who glared and howled like demons around, he lifted me in his arms, and kissed me, and they vanished, muttering curses and anathemas.

Strange to say, we suddenly changed places. He lay upon the bed of death, and I stood watching him, and he called me “His son, his dear long-lost son.” Then, taking from his bosom a roll of papers, sealed with rich armorial bearings, he bade me open them when he should be no more;—then, showing me a miniature, he said, “This is your mother, your unhappy mother,”—and the features were those of her I had seen in the boat; and then he fixed his

his classic acquirements; but he declared *they* must have been dreaming, as he did not know a word of Greek. It was afterwards ascertained, however, that he had been servant to a professor, at Gottingen, in his youth, and that his mind had received the impression of some passages he had heard, without his being conscious of it.

dying eyes upon me, and said, "I pardon you for not embracing the faith of your forefathers; but my malediction be upon you, if you marry the daughter of Lord Eaglehurst;"—then, with a heavy groan, he died. I was about to tear open the roll of papers, when I was aroused by Mr. Figmat's footboy, who said it was time to rise, for he had heard his master coughing at his missus for twenty minutes.

Glad was I to be disturbed from this wild dream, the impression of which remained upon my mind with all the force of waking reality. The features of her who called herself my mother, as well as of him who acknowledged that I was his son, appeared as vividly as though they were standing before me. I could have recognised them amongst thousands: every word, every gesture, of the actors in these scenes were as clearly defined as if I saw them in a picture; and yet every effort to recal the name pronounced by Lady Delphine proved vain. Call it superstition, or what you will, I was deeply affected, and am not ashamed to own that I looked upon this more as a vision than a dream,—more as a kind of revelation than one of those feverish fantasies, the effect of mental agitation or bodily suffering. What connexion there could be between Lady Del-

phine, Sophia, and her who called me son, or between the dying Venetian, who called himself my father, and the Toryville family, I could not comprehend. Although my mind was strangely bewildered, I felt convinced that the mystery of my birth and family, a mystery that I had hitherto little cared to unravel, was in the hands of Lady Delphine's family. I therefore resolved to lose no time in asking my master's permission to wait upon her, and also to proceed without delay to Lincoln's Inn.

Having scrupulously arranged every little object of furniture in my small chamber, I descended the back-stairs, and was fortunate enough to reach the breakfast-parlour before the rest of the family. The first who entered was Sophia, who arrived with her mother's keys to prepare breakfast. She was more pale than on the evening before ; but her sweet countenance and beauteous figure were adorned with that neatness and simplicity, that exquisite freshness, which is so peculiar to the early toilet of English women. When she saw me, she smiled, and said in an artless, ingenuous manner, " You do not look so well, Mr. Jessop, as you did yesterday ; but I am glad you are not quite so frightful as you appeared to me last night. Do you know I had a horrid dream about you ? "

“ A dream !” replied I, starting, for the coincidence was striking ; “ a dream ! and may I venture to ask the subject ?”

“ It was so strange and confused,” replied she, “ that I can scarcely recollect ; besides, it is both wicked and absurd, to think of such nonsense ; only, I must confess, I was so frightened that I could not close my eyes afterwards : I am still all trembling from its effects.”

“ I am sorry, miss,” answered I, trying to conceal my feelings, “ to have been the innocent cause of your passing a restless night.”

“ I can tell you that you were not quite so innocent as all that,” responded she, interrupting me ; “ and if it were not that dreams always come by contraries, I should be terrified out of my senses at you.”

“ It is indeed to be hoped in that case,” rejoined I, “ they will turn out the reverse of what they sometimes appear. You may rely upon it that it will be the study of my life to prove the truth of the adage, as far as you are concerned. How could I possibly do anything to alarm one so good and beautiful as you are ?”

“ Dear me,” replied she, whilst the colour tinged her very ears and shoulders, “ you frighten me almost as much as you did in

my dream. Those are the very words you used."

"When?" demanded I, "and where? tell me, I beg, in what manner I appeared to you."

"Why," replied she with innocent frankness, "it is too ridiculous; but I fancied that we were at Vauxhall, and we lost papa and mamma in the crowd; and the scene changed into a church, and there stood a clergyman, and you were going to place a ring upon my finger, when a tall, beautiful girl, who said you were her husband, rushed between us; and then, when I looked at you, you were grown black and hideous, like a death's head, and you grasped me with your long skeleton arms, and tried to kill me—and I screamed.

"Bring up the cold ham, Simon," exclaimed my master, who entered at this moment and embraced his child. "Good morning to you, dearest Sophy! good morning, Mr. Jessop—slept well, eh? How now! what's the matter with you both? Why, Sophy, my child, you look as if you had been unloading bags of cochineal. Burning your face making my toast?" This only made her blush the more, whilst she replied, "Why the fact is, papa, that I had a horrid dream last night, and I was telling it."

Here one of Figmat's coughs gave her a hint to

pause, and she therefore busied herself in pouring out the tea, and he proceeded ! “ Stuff and nonsense : dreams, child ; I thought you had more sense than to think of such trash ; and you, Mr. Jessop, have you been dreaming ? why, your eyes look as red as a Mussulman’s skull-cap, and your cheeks as pale and woe-begone as the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*. If you have dreamed, I hope it is not of money bags : they bode bad luck. But no more of your dreamings. I am a matter-of-fact man—the muffin, if you please ;—that egg was laid in the year one. But we have no time to lose ; it only wants five minutes to nine : down with your breakfast, and then to business.”

I took no further notice of what he said than to reply that I was very well, and had never slept better, and, having despatched my breakfast, I followed him into his counting-house. There he introduced me to four other young men, who were my colleagues ; pointed out the letters, invoices, and accounts that I was to copy, and then taking one of the clerks with him, he proceeded to the London Docks, to superintend the unloading of one of his vessels, which had just arrived with a rich freight from the Levant.

When his back was turned, the other clerks

laid down their pens and asked me several questions, to which I returned such laconic answers as gave them little encouragement, and therefore they fell to talking about their amours, their rows with watchmen, and the state of the odds upon an approaching fight between two noted bruisers, besides many other topics of an equally fashionable nature. In the meantime I set myself to work, and this with so much despatch and accuracy that, when Figmat returned, he was extremely satisfied, and said that I had only to continue in this way, and I should get through more business than any other two men in his employ—a compliment that no ways raised me in the opinion of my companions; one of whom had already called me a proper spoony for not going halves with him in a bet upon his bull terrier against that of a clerk in a neighbouring banking-house, and set up a laugh at the expense of my “Johnny raw” dress. I had availed myself, however, of my master’s absence to put into execution the preliminaries of my visit to Lady Delphine, to whom I thought it would be proper to write before I ventured to obtrude myself upon her. After tearing up at least twenty different copies, I determined upon the following lines, which I addressed to Lord

Eaglehurst's house in Hanover Square, and gave it to the porter to throw into the two-penny-post.

“ No. 45, Lothbury, March 18—.

“ My Lady—It was only yesterday, upon my first arrival in London, that I was aware of your ladyship's being still in England. I avail myself, therefore, of the earliest moment to throw myself upon your indulgence, and to supplicate by the life of that dear brother who was once my friend, that you will allow me to offer such personal explanations, as will, I trust, prove my entire innocence of an accusation that has caused me to become a wanderer and outcast, to forfeit the protection of my guardians, and to lose the esteem of those, to preserve whose good opinion I would willingly have sacrificed my own existence. Through the kindness of a benevolent clergyman, I have been rescued from the great miseries that have been my lot since I imprudently quitted Thistle-house, and am now in a situation, where, by industry and attention, I may aspire to better days. I require little; for adversity has schooled me to moderation, and limited my wants to the narrowest compass.

“ Next to the natural desire I feel to be re-

stored to the protection of those who placed me under Mr. Birchell's care, my first ambition is, if possible, to clear myself in the estimation of your family. The same sense of honour that drove me to fly from my persecutors, now impels me to seek every means of re-establishing my character. I have written to Lord Eaglehurst, and Lord William, as well as to my anonymous guardians, but have received no reply. The absence of the two first accounts for their silence. The denial of a reply from the other is also, I trust, the result of accident. But it is my intention to search for them, and I will make bold to add, that a strange foreboding tells me that your ladyship may have it in your power to assist me.

“I have one claim to your consideration which I would rather conceal than communicate, did I not feel justified in exerting every honourable means of exciting your interest in my favour. Your life was once in danger at Frogmore. It was saved by the sudden intervention of a loathsome animal, from whom Lord F. Springwood merited the same chastisement for his cruelty at that moment, as he had already met with at the same hands for insulting your brother. Yes, at the same hands—for they were those of the unfortunate outcast whom Provi-

dence threw in your way, and who has now the honour to subscribe himself

“Your Ladyship’s most humble
and obedient servant,

“PEREGRINE PENGUIN.

“P. S. May I venture, in the event of your condescending to send me a reply, to beg you to address it to John Jessop.”

The anxiety with which I waited that day for an answer, exceeds all belief. My master, having an engagement to dinner, left me with his wife and daughter. Either from the absence of her husband, or from observing the care which I had shown in attending to her household injunctions, and the eagerness I evinced in anticipating her wishes, Mrs. Figmat appeared to treat me more kindly than the preceding day. She complimented me upon the skilful manner in which I carved a neck of mutton, pointed out what were the best parts of a dish of pigs’ ears, and seeing me still look pale and haggard, although to please her I ate until I was nearly suffocated, she good-naturedly said, “I am not surprised at your having a head-ache, Mr. Jessop, accustomed as you have been to the fresh air of the country. I can’t

abide it much longer myself—I am quite wasting away, and Sophy getting as green under the eyes as turtle fat. I have told Figmat that he'll kill me, and her, if he does not take us a box out of town, or a house at the West-end. He's rich enough for that, and it's time Sophy should be introduced to fashionable movements.*

“ There's Mrs. Windfall has a beautiful snugery down at Twickenham, and sees all the first company from the West-end—lords, poets, and baronets; and Mrs. Windfall's movements are constantly in the Post, whilst we are kept mewed up in this dark, unwholesome neighbourhood, and never get a sight of anything but aldermen, Turkey merchants, bulls, and bears, and all manner of such persons. And though I flatter myself I made as genteel acquaintance at Bath as Mrs. Windfall or any one else—a bit of the brown, if you please — there's no person of fashion that will come to these distant parts of London, without post-horses,

* As there is something a little equivocal in this expression, it is perhaps necessary to explain that Mrs. Figmat must have used the term poetically, for the comings, goings, eatings, dancings, weddings, and divers other interesting operations of 'squires, baronets, viscounts, and perhaps of those of higher degree, which are usually inserted in the journals.

as one of Sophy's West-end partners at the Mansion-house ball, told me—are you fond of marrow-bones? Lord! Sophy, my dear, what ails you? what are you staring at Mr. Jessop for, as if he was a boar's-head with a lemon in his mouth? He won't bite you, child;—the melted butter, Simon.” At this moment her speech was cut short by the foot-boy letting fall a tray full of plates and dishes, which he was carrying out of the room. This set Mrs. Figmat in such a state of fury that, with a degree of activity of which I thought her incapable, she jumped up, seized the toasting-fork that hung by the chimney, and commenced such a discharge upon the lad's head and shoulders, that would have reduced them to fragments, had not his clay been moulded into a form as cohesive as iron-stone china.

“ You shall pay for it—you shall,” roared out the enraged lady—“ you clumsy, butter-fingered brute.”

“ I arn't a brute, ma'am, but a christian; and I didn't do it a purpose,” said he, “ it's only a misfortune.”

“ Misfortune ! it's the second dozen you have broken in the last ten days—I won't keep you an hour longer.”

“ Then you may pick up the pieces yourself,”

answered the impudent varlet; "I can easily better myself; I have a quarter's wages coming, and you may pay yourself, they be only common ware; and my old livery is my own by agreement;" and so saying he walked sulkily out of the room.

This gave me a further opportunity of gaining favour in my mistress's sight. For as she stood balancing upon her two legs, like a Dutch dogger rocked to and fro by the billows, her cheeks distended with choler, as top-sails are flated by the wind, and her short thick arm, and clenched hand extended before her, like the stumpy bowsprit before the round and shapeless bows, I jumped up, seized the tray, picked up all the pieces, hastened down to the kitchen, and finding the foot-boy blubbering out his tale to the greasy cook, whilst he demolished the remainder of the pigs' ears, I whispered in his own, that if he would hurry up stairs with the rest of the dinner, and beg his mistress's pardon, I would pay the damage. This was too good an offer to be refused; so I returned with the tidings of his contrition on my lips, and one of those marvels of English culinary art, a roly-polly dumpling, in my hand, whilst he followed with a rueful face and the marrow-bones.

“Don’t thank me, you clumsy fellow, but Mr. Jessop,” said my mistress, as the lad expressed his sorrow for the offence and his gratitude for her pardon. “Mr. Jessop, I wish all young men were like you—though I say it that ought not, to your face, for I hate flattery. Lord! Sophy, my dear, did you never see marrow-bones before, that you keep looking at them as if they were cast-iron pipes from the gas company.”

Sophy blushed, but said nothing: in truth, whether it were the impression of her last night’s dream, or some other cause, the beautiful girl did look at me in a manner that a vainer man, or one better acquainted with the art of ogling, would have construed to his own advantage. And indeed I could not avoid observing that her eyes betrayed an expression of curiosity and kindly interest towards me, which, when coupled with her dream and observations at breakfast, and my own vision, had more effect upon me than I could have imagined in so short a time. I began to imagine all of a sudden that I felt an inclination to be in love; and, yet how could that be? for I imagined myself in love with Lady Delphine.

Sceptics who disbelieve in dreams have the same want of faith in love at first sight. For

my part, I have the utmost confidence in this sudden electrical agency; I look upon the wounds thus received to be like that of the barbed or poisoned arrows shot by ambushed Indians, which rapidly communicate their venom to the whole system, and which cannot be extracted without long suffering, long convalescence, and leaving an ineffaceable scar. Whereas, those love-wounds that come as the last awards of justice were used to come from Spain,* or as exotic flowers grow upon their stems, first swelling, then budding, and at last blooming by artificial heat, and, what is against all precepts of true love, often blowing out of season or not at all. These often heal by the first intent, and are of that light and skin-deep nature, that they are easily cured by a little abstemiousness.

Such were not my reflections, when Mrs. Figmat and her daughter left me, according to the good old English fashion, to finish the remainder of a half-pint decanter of port; but such have been the fruits of subsequent ex-

* Such was the tardy process of justice in the Spanish courts, that it was common in former days, amongst the inhabitants of the distant provinces of her mighty empire to say, *Que me venga la muerte d' Espana*, (let death come to me from Spain.)

perience. As it was, I abandoned myself to the unsentimental process of toasting a captain's biscuit in the fire, indulging the while in a reverie as wild as that of poor Alnaschar the glass vender, about Sophia and Lady Delphine, whose images twisted round in my mind, as if it had been the axis of a safety-valve, and they the balls suspended at the ends. Fairy visions that were ever and anon effaced by the features of the stern lady and dying Venetian of my dream. Indeed, such is the force of moral impressions, that I heard their voices, and saw their faces, in every object around, and as it generally occurs under similar circumstances, retraced them the more distinctly when I closed my eyes. I was meditating upon this until I almost trembled at the sight of my own shadow upon the wall, when I was startled by the entrance of the foot-boy, with a letter which, by-the-bye, he was coolly squeezing into a circular shape, in order to get a glimpse at its contents.

"Are you sure it's for you?" demanded he as he offered it to me.

"Why?" replied I, taking it from him.

"Because," answered he, "it smells like a perfumer's shop, and it arn't the kind of paper which our clerks generally receives, and it has

got a crown on the seal, and comes from some West-end lord or so: I know that, because I was errand-boy once to a nobleman in Piccadilly, and only left him, more fool I, to better myself, as I heard people always made fortunes in the city; but I shall go back again, for one don't get no perquisites nor see no company, and one can't speak but what master coughs, nor move but what missus thinks one's a thieving—and, if you please, don't forget to snuff the candles, for there's a thief in that one, and missus will say it's we have been a wasting them."

"It is for me," replied I, after examining the precious paper; then giving him a hint to leave me, I carefully cut round the seal, which had a coronet with initials underneath, and at length I took courage to read its contents, which shall be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

I fall into an ecstasy of joy, in which I am interrupted by Mrs. Figmat, who, nevertheless, interests herself in fitting me out to appear in fine company—Stop thief! I do so, and am very strangely rewarded in consequence thereof—How an Irishman accounts for beating his wife with his handkerchief.

DRAWING the candle close to me I read as follows.

“ Bruton Street, March, 18—.

“SIR,—It will give me great pleasure to receive you any day before three o’clock, at my aunt’s, Lady Castlerose’s, with whom I am staying during Lord Eaglehurst’s absence. Let me tranquillize your mind by assuring you that any protestations of innocence are superfluous. None of us ever did you the injustice to suppose you capable of the action laid to your

charge by Mr. Nibshort, and by that weak but vindictive creature, Lord F. Springwood. Indeed, if the public journals had fallen in your way, you would more than once have seen that advertisements were inserted by my father, and by your anonymous guardians, urging you to call upon them or make known your address. Deeply as it is to be regretted that you should have rejected Count de Florenne's advice, and not have remained to face the ridiculous but shameful accusation of the person whom my brother, and the good old Count, always suspected to be a very bad man. I ought to be thankful to Providence for it, since you say that it is to you that I am indebted for my rescue from the danger that menaced me at Frogmore. I will not, however, talk of my thankfulness, for I trust you will not find me or my family ungrateful. But I confess my woman's curiosity is excited to the utmost degree by your communication, and I am most anxious to know what you mean by the latter part of your letter.

"You say that I may have it in my power to aid you in discovering your guardians. This, I fear, is a hope that will not be realized. My father and brother wrote repeatedly to XX. according to the address given to Mr. Birchell, but received no answer, and upon

calling in Lincoln's Inn were equally unsuccessful. The lawyer who resides there, pleaded ignorance of the name and abode of his employer, who, however, as it appears from the advertisements, one of which I enclose from a late paper, was equally desirous with ourselves to discover your place of concealment. I will conclude this long epistle by saying that one of my dear brother's last injunctions to me was, to exert every effort to find out your retreat, and to assure you that his friendship and gratitude would remain undiminished if, as he doubted not, you proved still worthy of them. Permit me to assure you, in his and my father's name, as well as my own, of the sincerity of our grateful feelings, and that I am, Sir,

“ Your very obedient servant,

“ DELPHINE TORYVILLE.

“ P.S. My aunt, who is no less eager than myself to hear an account of your adventures, and to thank you in person, desires me to say that if you have no engagement, she shall be, happy to see you at dinner, to-morrow, at seven o'clock. It will be preferable to a morning call.”

The enclosed advertisement ran as follows:

“The youth who fled from a seminary near Salisbury upon the fifth of October, 18—, is earnestly requested to make his address known to Messrs. Robinson and Grindwell, Solicitors, Lincoln’s Inn Old Square, who have a communication to make to him, of the utmost importance.”

I had scarcely read this letter through ere I burst into a sort of hysterical laugh of joy. Never did Bologna, the harlequin, or his celebrated cotemporary, the inimitable Grimaldi, commit more gambols. Had any one entered they would have supposed I was practising for a second transmigration into a monkey’s skin. I danced, rubbed my hands, sung, seized the tongs by way of a violin, and the poker by way of a bow, and in short made such a noise that it at length attracted the notice of Mrs. Figmat. Whilst my back was turned, the door was opened by her, and I was brought to my senses by her exclaiming, “Hey day, Mr. Jessop, are you tipsy? Why you must have been at the celeret; and yet your glass is clean, and the wine’s all in the decanter—well! well! sober or not, this is not the place for such tomfooleries. It’s lucky Figmat’s not at home, or he’d cure you of fiddling. I thought you were a proper behaved,

well-to-do young man, but, as I said yesterday, there's no trusting clerks or footboys."

"I beg your pardon madam," answered I, "for making such a disturbance, but this is the first moment of happiness I have known for many a long day. I have just received a letter of great importance to my future welfare and honour, and an invitation to dine to-morrow at Lady Castlerose's."

"Dine with Lady Castlerose!" exclaimed my mistress, softening her tone; "what, you dine with the Countess of Castlerose, whose movements I always see in the court circular, and who gave a breakfast to the Queen and all the royal family, to which not even the Lord Mayor or any of the city authorities were invited? Dear me, marvels will never cease. Who would have thought of one of our clerks being invited to dine with a countess! I should not wonder if you were to meet all the fashionable West-end people there."

"I am highly gratified at this honour, madam," replied I, "and the more so, since it may perhaps lead to the discovery of my parents or guardians; who, I have some reason to hope, are persons of property, and that I am not altogether so destitute as I appear."

"Ah! that's what Sophy, said," rejoined my

mistress, in whose estimation I had risen as rapidly as does the quicksilver in the thermometer, when carried from exposure to out-door frost into a hothouse: “ ‘I am sure,’ said Sophy to me last night as I tucked up her bed, and put out the fire,—I always take off the coals, for fear of accidents; though Figmat says it’s better to hang on the fire-guard and leave them. If you have done playing the fiddle with those tongs, you may take off these, and we will go up stairs: for it’s no use wasting them, and best Wall’s-end, at sixty shillings. ‘Mamma,’ said Sophy, ‘there is something very extraordinary in Mr. Jessop’s history. I should not be surprised if he were to turn out quite different from what he seems; his manner and appearance are so superior to those of the other clerks, who can only talk about boxing and Sadler’s Wells. And Mr. Jessop knows all about music, and French books, and has had as good an education as if he had been brought up at a fashionable boarding-school.’

“ ‘I should not wonder, and then again I should,’ answered I to Sophy—but, dear me,” added my mistress, with that kind of maternal feeling, which, in despite of her apparent vulgarity, formed the basis of her character, “if you are to dine with the Countess of Castlerose, have

you got a nice frilled shirt, and decent things? You can't go in that kind of tumble-come-trundle dress; you'll want a pair of pumps, and silk stockings, and a white waistcoat. I'd advise you to step out with Simon into Cheapside, and order some ready-made fashionable clothes, and I'll tell Mary to get you a shirt nicely plaited, and a cravat done up with some starch: you can't dine with a countess without starch."

This important part of the morrow's ceremony had never struck me, nor indeed was I aware, until I looked at myself in the handsome mirror, which decorated the lower end of the worthy citizen's dining-room, that my cravat was twisted round my neck like a halter, and that my coat, which formerly belonged to Captain Rightford, hung upon me like a sack.

Simon was now summoned, and, under his guidance, I was taken first to a tailor's, celebrated for fitting-out the young city bucks, and then to a hosier's and shoemaker's, where I was furnished with the essential articles recommended by Mrs. Figmat, who desired me to tell the tradesmen to send my purchases and the bills to the house, and by no means to put a farthing in my pocket, or the pickpockets would soon discover my being a stranger, and rob me of every shilling, for that the police was so bad

that it was not safe for any one to walk the streets. It was fortunate that I did so; for as I was turning round the corner by the Bank, I felt a pull at my coat, and saw my pocket handkerchief transferred to other hands: and although I turned round and seized the culprit, and although a city constable was standing by, he was allowed to escape, because "he had not got it;" and all I got for attempting to act the part of a thief-taker, was a laugh from the bystanders, and some severe blows on the head from some of the rogue's accomplices, who surrounded and hustled me.

As it was not exactly accordant with my notions of honour to receive a blow without retaliating, and as my blood was up, I requested a well-dressed, civil-looking gentleman, who was crying, "Shame! shame!" to hold my coat whilst I avenged myself. He kindly consented, saying that I was a brave young cock, and that he would stand by me. I therefore threw it off, and in a moment pitched into one of my aggressors with such vigour, that he soon gave up the contest, and as no one came forward to take his part, I turned round to thank my bottle-holder and recover my garment. But he had disappeared like Asmodeus, bottle, coat, and all: and the only consolation I heard was, "Why, you flat, he was

one of the swell mob ; you'll never see it again." A crowd having collected, and there being no danger, the police thought it time to interfere ; so three or four watchmen came up, collared me, swore I also was one of the gang, and that I had only got up a sham-fight in order to make a stoppage in the street, and thus give a better opportunity to my confederates for picking pockets. In vain I protested, declaring I was a total stranger, and clerk to Mr. Figmat of Lothbury ; and called upon Simon to bear witness to my respectability. I might as well have sung lullaby to the falls of Schafhausen. The footboy shrunk back and left me to my fate ; and the watchmen, whose numbers increased when they found there was no one to contend with, dragged me to the watchhouse, amidst the shouts and laughter of the thieves, and other vile characters who had assembled around.

When we reached this filthy, inodorous palace of nocturnal justice, I was poked into a sort of cellar, or underground strong-room, where I found two or three unfortunate women in a brutal state of intoxication ; an Irish paviour who had been unmercifully beating his own wife ; a footman from the Mansion-house, who had been caught in the act of kissing the spouse

of the Lord Mayor's valet, and had kicked the husband's shins for objecting to his proceedings; a hackney coachman, who had broken a tapster's head with a porter pot, for questioning the genuineness of a most unmintlike six pence; two miserable savoyards, who had been incarcerated, because they thought they had as much right to treat the citizens to the music of their organs, as the old fish-women had to employ theirs in the inharmonious operation of crying "Sprats!" and lastly, a jolly tar, who considered himself entitled to spend the prize-money he had won from the French, in breaking the French plate-glass windows of a citizen's shop.

In a few minutes I was called up to answer for my misdeeds before the sort of Midas who gloried in the title of "constable of the night," and who was sitting with a pipe in his mouth, a Welsh wig on his head, a Welsh rabbit and a pot of porter on his table, and by his side a pale-faced lad who acted as scribe, the chirographic portion of his worship's education having been omitted. At the moment I entered, this worthy was disposing of the domestic dispute between the Irishman and his wife. "You are a proper vagabone!" exclaimed he, addressing the former; "how could you ill-use this here poor voman after that there brutal manner? why you must

have taken a stick as thick as my wrist, and the law says it mayn't be bigger nor your thumb."

"Faith your wortchip," replied the culprit, "it isn't myself sure that never used no unlawful instriment."

"Gammon !" exclaimed the judge.

"It's thrue as Gospel," rejoined the paviour, "for I knows the law, your honour, and all I bate her wid was my pockyhankychee."

"Gammon !" ejaculated the other.

"It may be a whole hog, your wortchip, and a farrow of pigs besides," replied the husband, "but I'll take my Bible oat it's thrue by that same. Isn't it, Judy, darling?"

"Gammon !" again puffed out his honour.

"Faith, and what Dennis says is as true as the wig on your wortchip's head," answered the wife, with a curtsey.

"Gammon !" once more exclaimed the constable, adding, "what, beat a woman's eyes black and blue, with your pocket-handkercher. It's down-right impossible.—Write down 'brutal assault and battery.'"

"That's just as your wortchip plases," rejoined Dennis ; "but I never tould a lie in my life, only barring when I didn't spake the whole thruth at confission ; and if you'll ask Judy she'll till you that what I bate her wid was the

handkychee—for your honour must know that I always blows my nose wid my fingers.”

This witticism threw his worship into such a fit of laughing, and so completely softened his heart, that he told the sufferer she had better forgive her husband, and settle the matter out of court. This offer was accepted, and the case being dismissed I was pushed forward.

“And what’s the charge against this here fellow without a coat on his back?” demanded the constable; “he’s a bad un, no doubt; a regular Old Baily bird!”

“The worst I ever see’d in my beat, your honour,” answered one of my captors: “he’s one of Slip-knot Bob’s gang. We knows him as well as our boxes.”

“Write down—‘well known thief,’” said the constable to his amanuensis. “And what was he arter when you grabbed him?”

“Why we heard a cry of stop thief, and when we runs up we found he’d prigged a gentleman’s bandanny; and when we come to seize him, as in duty bound, he offs with his coat, chucks it, bandanny and all, to one of his cumfrederates, and then purtends to get up a mill, to give time to t’other to bolt with the swag.”

“Write down, ‘Picking pockets, caught in

the fact—breaking the king's peace.' That's enough. Hand him into the hole. It's a case for the Mansion-house."

This summary mode of dispensing injustice was little to my taste, so I said, "I assure you, sir, the watchmen are mistaken; I only came to London yesterday, and——"

"Gammon," replied the constable.

"Upon my word, if you will let some one of them go with me to Mr. Figmat's in Lothbury, you will find——"

"Gammon," again retorted he, whiffing forth a stream of pigtail.

"Sir, if you will not allow me to speak——"

"No more of your gammon," retorted he again; "do you think I sits here to do nothing else but listen to your flash? Bring up the next."

Hereupon I was once more transferred to the cellar.

CHAPTER VII.

Figmat performs the same service for me as did the angel for the apostle—His opinions upon music and poetry—Those of Lady Castlerose upon promotion in the navy.

I HAD not remained many seconds in the dark cell in which they thrust me, ere I heard Figmat's voice, who, having heard of my misfortune from Simon, had good-naturedly hastened to the watchhouse to give evidence in my favour. I was therefore restored to liberty, after the fees were paid for the constable's loss of time and the watchmen's wilful mistake.

Figmat, who had been apprized by his wife of my motives for going out, did not seem to participate in her admiration of my noble correspondent. When I asked his permission to

dine in Bruton-street, and to proceed on the following morning to call upon the solicitor in Lincoln's Inn, he replied, "Providing you attend to your business, and are punctual to our hours, I have no objection. But I am a straightforward man, and don't like to see one of my clerks getting into bad company."

"Bad company, Figmat!" exclaimed his better half; "the countess of Castlerose bad company! Did ever anybody——"

"I don't care a splinter for anybody," rejoined Figmat, with a violent cough: "I am a man of few words. All I say is, that when young men keep company that's above their station in life, it leads them into expenses they cannot afford; it teaches them to become idlers, gamblers, and drunkards; it fills their heads with contempt for their equals, while it brings the contempt of their superiors on themselves, and ends by leading them into jail, where their fine friends leave them in the lurch. And if that's not bad, I don't know what is. Besides, Lady Castlerose is an out-and-out Tory. If you'd read a sensible paper, like Perry's, instead of the stuff and nonsense about fashion, you would see that she is at the bottom of all the intrigues against our party. They say she is artful enough to have

converted Tom Paine or Jeremy Bentham : and although I look upon independence to be an Englishman's birth-right, I don't want to have my clerks running against my principles. But, Sophy, my darling, let us have some music ; you are not one of the conceited birds that can sing and won't sing. Good feeling makes plain dealing. No humbug about you."

His daughter placed herself at once at the piano-forte, and I not only offered to turn the leaves of her book, but prepared to give her a specimen of my own vocal powers, and said that I would try to accompany myself. Figmat, who had settled himself down to read Cobbett's Register, lifted up his spectacles at this, and stared at me. I expected to be put down by a cough, but it seemed that the charms of music were not without their power over the sturdy citizen, so he merely grunted out a husky "Humph !" and proceeded with his reading. My offer was at once accepted by Sophia and her mother ; the former eagerly expressed the pleasure it would afford her to hear me, and the latter observed that, "Instead of thinking the worse of young men for devoting a part of their spare time to what many people called school-girls' business, it's my opinion it keeps them out

of mischief, and makes them very pleasant companions upon a water-party to Richmond, or a pic-nic to Norwood Forest."

The song I selected was one I had learned from M. de Florennes. It was as old as the hills ; but, as it may be as new to many of my readers as it was to the Figmats, I will transcribe it.

Mon cœur soupire dès l'aurore
Le Jour un rien me fait rougir
Le Soir mon cœur soupire encore,
Je sens du mal et du plaisir.
Tout à mon ame te rappelle
Je jouis de mon erreur.
Ah, dis moi, comment on apelle,
Ce que se passe dans mon cœur.

Je rêve à toi quand je sommeille,
Ton nom m'agite et me seduit,
Je pense à toi quand je m'éveille,
Partout ton image me suit.
Tout à mon ame, &c. &c. &c.

Quand tu parles ta voix touchante
Dans mes sens porte le plaisir,
Ton aspect me trouble et m'enchanté
Je te cherche, et voudrois te fuir.
Tout à mon ame, &c. &c. &c.

There must have been something in the melody or in my voice which worked upon honest

Andrew's feelings, as he had not understood a syllable of the words, (the latter of which, however, were not lost upon Sophia;) instead of hearing his ominous cough at the end of each stanza, as I expected, he exclaimed, "Ancore ! ancore !" and made me repeat the verses half-a-dozen times, while he beat time with his red spectacle-case. The only remark he made after this, was, "It's a pity it is not in English;" for I've heard say that all French songs are full of nothing but stuff about love, sighs, and all such trumpery. However, although I have a great aversion to all kinds of romantic folly, and so has Sophy, (Sophia's eyes and manner betrayed a very different sentiment,) I should have no objection to hear you sing 'The thorn,' 'Young love among the roses,' or 'Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish ladies;' though I prefer 'The jolly young waterman,' 'Black-eyed Susan,' or such songs as have some connexion with the sea, and the naval glory of Old England. If I were king, sir," continued he, "instead of paying a verse-maker, or Laureat, as I think they call him, to carpenter out my birth-day praises, and to make a god out of what is very often but a very indifferent kind of mortal, I would offer a prize every year for the best composition in honour of our brave tars and gallant soldiers,

and have it printed in Moore's almanack. I'd tie the contractors down to time though, or they would be as long-winded as old Windfall. A poet might as easily express all his sentiments in fifty lines, as I can mine in fifty words, which is about my measure."

Having finished his Register, he rose, said it was time for bed, and then pointing to Cobbett's production, added, "If you want to read pure English, right down plain sense, take and read that before you go to bed."

"To-morrow, if you please, Mr. Jessop," exclaimed Mrs. Figmat; "I will not have the house set on fire—I insist upon your putting out——"

"And I insist upon your not putting *me* out, Mrs. Figmat," replied her husband. "He is the fellow to drive the nail into the right hole. Home truths, every one of them. Don't talk to me about his being coarse and unmannerly; he knows what the country wants, and although he may overshoot the mark now and then, his shots never fall short. It's lucky we live in a free country—though not half so free as it ought to be, or can be, until we get reform in church and state: or they'd have had him hammered down in Newgate for life. He's a thorn in their sides, and will stand his ground against all the Tories

in the United Kingdom. He opens our eyes, and will make them shut their mouths before he has done."

Whatever Cobbett might effect in the latter way, his admirer was evidently not so successful, for his eulogium had just the contrary effect upon Mrs. Figmat, who yawned so wide, that one could see the very passage down her trachea, whilst her eyes, by a reciprocal manœuvre, completely merged under the fat, drooping lids by which they were encircled. Taking her daughter in one hand, and bidding me proceed to my chamber, she waddled out of the room, and I followed, not, however, without a kind look from Sophia, as she wished me good night.

In despite of Mrs. Figmat's injunction, I was half inclined to keep my light burning, for such had been the effect of the last night's vision, that I was no sooner in the dark, than the two faces I had seen, presented themselves to me; first appearing small, and encircled by a sort of halo of red and green fire, and then gradually becoming as distinct as full-sized portraits.

It was in vain I buried my head beneath the clothes; there they still were. Indeed, the more I attempted to exclude all light from my eyes, the plainer they appeared. At length, I fell into a sound sleep, and rose without a repe-

tition of my dream. In order to show my master that the favour I had solicited should not interfere with my duties, I worked all day with redoubled ardour, and gave him great satisfaction; not only by the distinctness of my writing, but by the facility and accuracy with which I made some calculations, that had puzzled the other clerks. At length, the evening closed in, and Mrs. Figmat, who seemed to be extremely interested in my appearing in a proper toilet, sent for me to try on the articles, which had been brought home.

I had hitherto remained, in a great measure, ignorant of the effect of dress upon the human frame; for my vestments had always been made with a view to strict utility, and without any attention to fashion. But now my new clothes were cut according to the taste of the day, and gave to my person a totally different air. The starch, which had been put into my cravat, rather annoyed me at first: but, as I worked my head about, indifferent to one or two wrinkles, more or less, I soon felt myself at ease, and when I descended into the drawing-room, the two ladies declared they should hardly have known me. Indeed, Mrs. Figmat was kind enough to say, "I've brought you one of my cambric pocket handkerchiefs, for you

have nothing but coloured cotton; only mind you don't lose it:" and Sophia no less generously provided me with a pair of kid gloves. Even my master went so far as to say, that I had the look of as good a gentleman as one might wish to see: and that I need not be ashamed to show my face among any of the Tory lords and placemen, whom I might meet at the West-end.

I was spared a further disquisition on these subjects, by the arrival of the hackney-coach, which, however, led Figmat to observe, that I ought to take the number, and pay the Jarvey before-hand, in order to avoid trouble and extortion: and that, although there was plenty of time, it was better to be too soon than too late. "None of your confounded unmannerly habits of keeping people waiting. It's just as easy to be at a place at seven, as it is at eight. Men of business, unless they are West-end coxcombs, ought to show an example of punctuality. I know it is the fashion, as they call it, to come an hour after their time. It's just the same with all their concerns: always behind-hand; never pay to the day. They draw upon the clock, as they do upon their creditors—long tick. And yet they have got nothing to do, nothing to prevent their being exact. There's some of

them, I've heard say, will sit yawning before the fire, picking their nails, and not begin to dress till dinner's announced; or keep their carriages waiting for an hour after the time appointed, and then tell their coachmen to drive like madmen, as if they had been detained by important affairs. But if they were to weigh me out such measures, they should whistle for a second invitation. It's time, however, for you to be gone; remember not to let that cunning Turk, Lady Castlerose, bamboozle you with her politics, and mind you come back in a coach, or we shall have to whip you up like a measure of coals out of another watchhouse cellar."

As I proceeded slowly through the streets, I had ample leisure to think of all that I had to say upon this eventful occasion. In the first place, I resolved to conceal nothing that had occurred to me, and to trust to the justice and generosity of my fair hostesses. Loudly did my heart beat, and violently did I tremble, when the coach at last drew up at the residence of the countess; and, at that moment, I would have given all I possessed, to have been back in Lothbury.

I was, however, speedily admitted, and ushered, by three or four tall, well-powdered footmen, up stairs, where an upper domestic, out of

livery, asked my name, threw open the drawing-room door, and not seeing the countess there, said, "Her ladyship will be down directly." Thank Heaven ! I was thus not only spared the dreaded ceremony of walking into their presence, but had time to collect my senses, and survey the apartment.

I had never seen anything like it before, and therefore could not be expected to be a judge, either of the correctness or taste of its furniture ; but it appeared to me like a chamber in one of those fairy palaces, that I had read of in eastern tales. It would be tedious to give a catalogue of its contents, or to describe its costly hangings, its brilliant mirrors, its rich buhl clocks and cabinets, its exquisite pieces of Sévre and Dresden china, and its few but rare pictures. The beauty and splendour of the whole, combined with their utility, and strict regard to good, honest English comfort, would have furnished matter for two columns in Mr. Robins's best style, and as many chapters for a fashionable novel. That which struck me most, however, was a portrait of Lady Delphine, by the hand of the illustrious Lawrence. I had never seen her but once, and that during the moment that she stood before me, at Frogmore ; but the likeness was inimitable, and the whole picture was ani-

mated with that truth, that grace, that noble ease, and remarkable harmony of effect and colouring, which distinguish the great artist's unrivalled productions. Opposite to this was that of her brother: not such as I had last seen him, a mere stripling, but a youth in the ripening vigour of manhood. And it seemed much older than he was in reality: and, although strikingly resembling, it was tinged with an expression of melancholy, an air of precocity, which gave it the appearance of one whose intellect had far outstripped the joyous light-heartedness of his years. Amidst a profusion of books and periodicals, which bestrewed the tables, I discovered an album, belonging to Lady Delphine. It lay open: and I was as much touched as flattered, when I saw in it an exquisite water-colour sketch of the scene at Thistleburn Mill, in which I was represented rescuing Lord William from a watery grave; on the opposite leaf were some prose sentences in his own hand-writing, recording the event, and containing a grateful compliment to me: and underneath the drawing were the following lines.

O Thou, whom winds and stormy seas obey,
Who, through the deep, gav'st ransom'd Israel way,

Say to my soul, Be safe ! and then mine eye
Shall scorn grim death, although grim death stand by.
O Thou, whose strength-reviving arm did cherish
Thy sinking servant, at the point to perish.
Stretch forth thy hand, or bid me tread the wave—
I'll come, I'll come ; for he that calls can save.

I was standing, I confess it, with the tears running down my cheeks, when a side door opened, and in walked Lady Delphine and her aunt. The former advanced towards me, and with that easy, unaffected grace, which is peculiarly characteristic of women of the highest birth, extended her hand towards me, and, turning to her aunt, kindly said, " Let me present to you the generous friend who saved dear William's life, and to whom our family can never testify sufficient gratitude."

I blushed up to the very summit of my head, and endeavoured to mumble out a few words in return ; but Lady Castlerose good-naturedly interrupted me, observing, " I am most happy to see Mr. Penguin : and I hope he will find no cause to repent his bravery and generosity."

" If it depends on me, certainly not," replied Lady Delphine : " I feel towards him as towards an old friend. I was accustomed, during so many years, to hear him constantly spoken of,

that it seems as if I had long known him personally, And I now hope we shall see as much of him as his occupations will permit."

"I shall be delighted to receive him," added Lady Castlerose; "and if my influence or interest can be of use, either in prosecuting his search after his relations, or furthering his prospects in life, he may depend upon me. I flatter myself ministers will not refuse me anything; and we might get him a pension at once. Pensions are really given away, now-a-days, to so many undeserving people, that I think, after all the services our family have rendered government, I am entitled to expect such a trifle as four or five hundred a-year for a friend. Only fancy, by-the-bye, the First Lord of the Admiralty hesitating about making Henry Bribeful post-captain, and giving him a frigate—it's abominable: they have no gratitude: it's enough to make one turn Whig or something worse. Why, old Mr. Bribeful, who sat for more than twenty-five years for one of our boroughs, has supported them, right or wrong, through good or bad, all his life."

"Not with his eyes open, at all events, aunt," replied Lady Delphine, smiling, "for you know that he always slept during the debate, and had a watchman placed at his elbow, to wake him

in time for the division. I repeat that I will have the frigate and promotion for young Bribe-ful, or I will threaten to deprive government of our support."

"But, my dear aunt," said Lady Delphine, "Captain Bribe-ful is not only a downright idiot, but so ill-tempered and tyrannical, that no one likes to serve with him: to promote such a man over the heads of so many deserving officers, would create discontent, and bring odium upon the Admiralty."

"A mere squall, my dear," rejoined Lady Castlerose; "besides, these things are done every day, and I do not see why an exception should be made for me."

Her ladyship's remarks were here interrupted by the arrival of a fourth individual, who was announced as Lord Voteburn, who, the countess told me, was one of the Lords of the Treasury, and to whom she forthwith communicated her grievance, which his lordship declared to be a very hard case, and promised that he would leave no stone unturned to further her commands. Dinner being announced, Lady Castlerose took the proffered arm of the nobleman, and walked out of the room. I stood, not knowing exactly what to do; but Lady Delphine advanced gracefully towards me, placed her arm in mine, and we followed down stairs.

CHAPTER VII

In which I briefly recount the effect produced upon my unsophisticated mind by my first aristocratic dinner—A sketch of Lady Castlerose's political principles—I narrate my history, and receive very agreeable intelligence—Inflated with conceit, I am loth to return to Lothbury—A few moral reflections upon the vanities and vexations of the spirit.

IF I had been struck with the splendour of the apartments above stairs, I was no less amazed at that of the dining-room and its accessories. My eye wandered from the richly-chased plate to the sparkling chrystal—from the beautiful old Dresden porcelain to the classic candelabras and vases, filled with flowers, which ornamented the centre of the table. If a hand, covered with a snow-white cotton glove, had not every now and then been protruded over my shoulder, to remove my plate or to fill my glass

with delicious wines that I had never tasted before, I should have imagined we had been waited upon by invisible agency—so rapid, so silent, and skilful, were the domestics.

What a contrast between this specimen of all that England could produce most perfect in taste, richness, and intimate knowledge of the art of living, and the miseries I had been accustomed to during so many months ! What a contrast even between the sumptuous and high-bred regularity of Lady Castlerose's establishment, and the vulgarity, noise, and squabbling, of Figmat's abode ! What a wide distinction between the noble carriage, the grace and dignity of the two ladies before me, and the coarseness of Mrs. Figmat ! I will not add, of Sophia, for she shone amidst her household gods like some brilliant gem embossed in base metal.

The conversation during dinner rolled upon various subjects. Lady Castlerose, who addressed herself principally to the Lord of the Treasury, made frequent allusions to her favourite politics, and showed that she took almost as much interest in the state questions of the day, as if she had been one of the cabinet. She proved that her principles were, I regret to say, as illiberal as could well be imagined, and as fixed as the pyramid of Cheops. From

what fell from her, I discovered that she advocated four or five leading theories, which were her sovereign panacea. Amongst the most prominent of these, were, implacable hatred and war to France, so long as she rejected the old Bourbon dynasty; everlasting contempt and abhorrence of America, for casting off that allegiance, which, I since discovered, was lost principally through the agency of unskilful and obstinate ministers; subsidies, too, and a cordial alliance with Russia and the other northern powers, in order to arrest the propagation of liberal principles, and to establish the despotism of the sword; a crusade against the press by every mode of *ex-officio* prosecution; the rejection of every claim put forward by Irish "papists," who were only fit to be treated as conquered Helots; the maintenance of existing institutions as regarded the right of property in boroughs, corporations, &c.; exclusion to all dissenters, and perpetual supremacy to the church, which she thought ought to be represented in the lower house.

Ignorant as I then was of all these matters, I nevertheless thought some of her doctrines rather ungenerous, and perhaps not very prudent. But her political principles were forgotten in the charms of her conversation and the bril-

liancy of her wit. I was above all things struck with her tact in avoiding any topic she thought might be painful to me, as well as the considerate manner in which she confined her questions and observations to such points as were likely to be suited to my age and position, or to draw forth my small stock of knowledge. She had not the bad taste to thrust great names and aristocratical acquaintances upon me: she did not talk of this duke's dinner, that marchioness's parties, or this Lady Lucy's marriage with that Sir Henry, or dwell upon the broad acres of the one, or the high blood, sole dowry, of the other. She was well-read, highly accomplished, an admirable judge of music and painting; literature, science, and the arts, were not only familiar to her, but, with that noble and enlightened feeling which distinguishes the most wealthy of the English nation, she expended a considerable portion of her large jointure in protecting and patronising artists and men of letters, to whom she opened her doors as well as her purse. These latter virtues were not made known to me by inspiration, but were communicated by Lord Voteburn, who, during the short time we sat together after dinner, spoke enthusiastically in her praise; and well he might, for he sat for one of her close boroughs.

When we returned to the drawing-room, Lady Castlerose drew the politician into a corner, and remained for some time absorbed in earnest conversation, leaving me to the care of her niece. I know not whether it was the unusual amount of my libations, or the moral intoxication of my mind, but I felt wonderfully excited, and talked without hesitation or embarrassment. Neither my manner nor my conversation appeared displeasing to my fair auditor, who urged me to enumerate many passages of my intimacy with her brother, and said she impatiently awaited Lord Voteburn's departure, that I might commence the narrative of my adventures. At length, his lordship's carriage was announced, and he took his leave, observing that he was obliged to be in his place early, in order to support a motion for an extraordinary supply, which, it was expected, would be vigorously attacked by the opposition. As soon as the door was closed, Lady Castlerose threw herself into one of the luxurious arm-chairs, near the fire, took up a skreen to protect her eyes from the glare, placed her small foot upon a velvet tabouret, poured some eau-de-cologne upon her embroidered handkerchief, and then, playing with the ear of a beautiful dwarf spaniel, which had jumped upon her lap, bade

me seat myself near her, and commence my story.

With the exception of the visionary sentiments I had so long entertained for the lovely being, who was placed, as it were, by enchantment, at my side, her bright and expressive eye beaming with mild lustre upon me, I concealed nothing from them; every trifling incident of my pilgrimage, since my quitting Thistle-house, was faithfully recorded, and alternately elicited smiles of merriment or expressions of sympathy: my monkey adventures particularly excited their interest. When I came to that part which related to her own rescue from the panther, an exclamation of surprise burst from her, and she said, "Can it be possible? is this the solution of that part of your letter which I was so anxious to have explained?"

"It is," replied I. I then minutely detailed all the circumstances that had taken place at Frogmore.

Although neither of the ladies said much at the moment, it was evident, from the expression of Lady Delphine's countenance and the exclamations of the countess, that my words carried conviction with them. Having brought down my story to my arrival at Mr. Figmat's, I stated that I should doubtless be condemned

as very superstitious, for allowing myself to be moved by a dream; but, when I combined this with the mysterious circumstances attending my infancy, my removal by an unknown, but evidently wealthy, person to Thistle-house, and various other incidents, I could not avoid entertaining hopes that Providence had ordained this extraordinary vision in order to facilitate that search after my parents, or those who were in possession of my secret, which I was now resolved to commence. "I dare not recount this dream," added I, "for you would think me both foolish and impertinent, especially as a portion of it is in some measure connected with your ladyship."

"With me!" exclaimed Lady Delphine,

"Yes," replied I; "and you would therefore be offended with my boldness, were I to mention it."

"The dream! the dream! by all means," exclaimed Lady Castlerose; "I have great faith in animal magnetism, and I look upon dreams as connected with the subject. You may therefore speak out, and do not dread the fate of Voltaire with the Princess of Prussia; although, of course, I am prepared for your having dreamed that you were in love with Delphine." This remark made me look ex-

tremely embarrassed. Lady Delphine appeared to perceive this, for her eyes were cast down. But the countess paid no attention to it, and again repeated, "I am all impatience—the dream."

I then narrated what had happened to me, omitting, however, the manner in which Lady Delphine had received me on my entering the boat, but added, "So strong are the impressions left upon my mind by the features of the lady and the Venetian, that, if I was skilled in miniature painting, I am convinced that I could draw their portraits to the life."

"Well, as you are not gifted with that talent, describe her," rejoined Lady Castlerose; "and let me see if I can recognise her amongst any of my acquaintance who have been in Italy." I did my best, and, as I proceeded, observed that the two ladies looked at each other in a significant manner. When I had terminated, Lady Castlerose exclaimed, "A scar, you say, upon her right cheek?"

"Yes," answered I, "part of which was concealed by the dark ringlets that flowed from beneath her hat."

"The coincidence is very extraordinary," observed Lady Castlerose.

Upon which Lady Delphine replied, "Oh!

that is too ridiculous to be thought of for a moment; besides, she never was in Italy, and, much as I dislike her, that is out of the question. It is rather unkind, by-the-bye, of your fair citizen," added she, "to communicate the plague to me: I dare say, poor thing, she caught it from some of the consignments from Turkey."

After musing for a short time, the countess said, "I trust, Mr. Penguin, you have sufficient good sense not to place faith in anything so absurd as dreams. I have been considering what is best to be done for you, and have taken the opinions of one or two judicious friends. Do not make yourself uneasy about the nonsensical affair at Thistle-house. I met Lady Raceinfield this morning, and she informs me Mr. Nibshort has left England for America under very suspicious circumstances."

"I told you, madam, that I had an extraordinary presentiment that Nibshort and the villain Martin were one and the same person," answered I.

"That is not impossible," rejoined the countess. "The fact of his roguery only came to light two or three days ago, and your old pedagogue is now as much inclined to believe in your innocence, as he was eager before to

prove you guilty ; Lord Felix is equally disposed to forget the past : and he shall do so, or I will not move a step in trying to get his younger brother a commission in the Guards. Dr. Scentwell is under great obligations to me, and I will answer for clearing up that part of your affair in a satisfactory manner : besides, the gamekeeper's murderers, who paid the forfeit of their crime at Reading, with others of their accomplices, who have been apprehended and transported, have all solemnly declared that the youth, who was in their company, had been dragged there against his will, that he was not a gipseey, but one whom they had compelled to remain with them, on account of his talent as a musician. You have nothing, therefore, to dread from any of these charges."

" But the warrants for apprehending me are still out," rejoined I.

" That is a mere matter of form," replied she. " I advise you to write to Mr. Birchell and Dr. Scentwell, and to declare yourself prepared to meet any accusations that may be brought against you ; in the meantime, I will guarantee that you may do so with perfect security : I would further advise your proceeding to-morrow morning to Lincoln's Inn."

" Daré I entreat your powerful intercession with the lawyer ?" demanded I.

“ I cannot promise you much assistance in that quarter,” responded Lady Castlerose. “ Mr. Robsome, who has the reputation of being an obstinate Whig, and has been employed against us in several elections, declined entering into any explanation with my brother, and denied all knowledge of your birth. But it stands to reason that he must be in communication with the persons whom it is your duty to discover, and, if he chooses, that he has the means of unveiling the mystery of your parentage. I assure you, I feel a deep interest in all that concerns you. You have been the victim of a false point of honour ; and I congratulate you upon having escaped from the miseries and dangers of your imprudent flight. My dear nephew and that darling girl, whom I look upon as my own daughter, owe their lives to your devotion.”

“ You overrate my services,” answered I ;
“ Providence threw me in their way.”

“ Yes,” retorted Lady Delphine, “ Providence ordained that you should be our guardian angel.”

“ You will not find any of us ungrateful,” resumed her aunt. “ Whatever may be your real station in life, and I firmly believe it to be most respectable, you may rely upon the exertion of our utmost influence in your favour. I have

insisted upon Lord Voteburn's securing the first vacant clerkship, either in the Treasury or Foreign Office, where you may initiate yourself into the routine of official business, until we get you appointed *attaché* to one of our embassies. Diplomacy is the line I should recommend, as being that in which I can best advance your interests. I must put you upon your guard, however, against the seditious principles of that talkative old rhubarb merchant, where you are now employed. He has the reputation of being a very troublesome, meddling person, and a great enemy to church and state: he caused us considerable annoyance at the last city election, and nearly succeeded in throwing out one of our candidates."

"And what kind of a person is your fair fig dealer?" demanded Lady Delphine.

"As beautiful, graceful, and prepossessing, as her mother is disagreeable in appearance," answered I; "but the kindness of the whole family during the short time I have been under their roof, has been more than I had any right to expect, and I should be very ungrateful if I were not to love——"

"Love the daughter as much as you please, especially as she will be enormously rich," said Lady Castlerose: "a very good spec, by-the-

bye, for some of my half-ruined acquaintance : I must send them to tilt a lance with you, Mr. Penguin. It is a fortunate circumstance for our young aristocracy, when they have ruined themselves in the west, to be able to fall back upon the gold-framed daughters of the east. You are very young, not much more than eighteen, I believe, but I nevertheless recommend you to lose no time. Generally speaking, these female citizens are as romantic as their papas are matter-of-fact ; and, as you are very good looking, and quite different from the city people she is accustomed to, you had better try to secure the game before she is known to our fortune-hunters."

Not choosing to betray the sentiments that occupied my mind at that moment, and being unable to make a suitable reply, I remained silent. The hackney-coach, which I had begged one of the footmen to send for, having been announced under the courteous phraseology of " Mr. Penguin's carriage is ready," I mustered courage to take leave. Before I went, Lady Castlerose and her niece shook me kindly by the hand, begging me to inform them immediately of the result of my interview with Mr. Robsome. And then the former added, " If you have no engagement on Sunday, I shall be

happy to see you at dinner. I have a musical *soirée*, at which I will introduce you to several distinguished and interesting persons; and, if you have not forgotten your violin, and are not ashamed of playing before so many strangers, you will oblige me by giving us a specimen of your talents, which, by your own account, are extraordinary. This will make you known, at once, to the *élite* of the fashionable world, and it will go very hard if you do not become one of the lions of the season."

One more kind good night was uttered by the ladies before I backed out of the room, and in a moment more I was in the coach, and upon my road to the city: my brains as much bewildered as if I had been whirled round upon the sails of a windmill.

I do not pretend to have fallen into many wholesome reflections, as I jumbled along the ill-paved streets between Berkeley-square and the Mansion-house. No, my mind was screwed up to the utmost pitch of excitement. I was intoxicated with just joy at the favourable turn that apparently had taken place in my destiny; and with the certainty that I might now show myself without fear of being accused of a vile crime. But I was also elated with many visionary hopes and pretensions, and, thrice dolted

ass that I was, imagined that the kindness of Lady Castlerose was the result of my own merits, and that Lady Delphine might possibly be animated with the same sentiments towards me, that I had so long entertained for her.

I was, in fact, in a sort of delirium; but not so demented as to forget the footboy's hints about knocking. So, when the coach drew up at the merchant's abode, I bade the driver ring, and was admitted by Simon, into what now appeared like the passage of a coal-cellar. There I was met by Mrs. Figmat, who, partly from curiosity to hear my account of the countess, and partly from her rule of not retiring to bed until the house-door was bolted, locked and chained, had sat up an hour beyond her usual time. I had prudence enough, however, to conceal from her that I could not avoid making a disadvantageous comparison between the high-bred grace and affability of the ladies I had left, and her own vulgar appearance and expressions. After I had testified my admiration of all that I had remarked in Bruton-street, she said, "I am not surprised at your being astonished; you have never seen anything of life, and I know they do the thing in great style at the West-end. But notwithstanding this, all is not gold that glitters. But I believe your head is turned already, for

you stand with the candle flaring, as if moulds were as cheap as rushlights."

Whether she was jealous of my admiration of Lady Castlerose, or angry with me for having kept her up until near midnight, I did not discover, but her manner was evidently less kind than it had been during the afternoon. Indeed, she told me she was sorry to hear I was so regardless of what was due to decency, as to talk of going to a party on a sunday; that she did not think Figmat would sanction such an infraction of the sabbath. "And if he does, I won't," added she, as she opened the door of the back-staircase, pointing that I might retire.

I required no second bidding to comply, and gladly threw myself into bed; not to sleep, for my mind was too much agitated, but to meditate upon the events of the past evening, and to build splendid castles for the future. My joy would have been complete, had not the portraits of the dark lady and the dying Venetian constantly obtruded themselves upon every object created by my imagination. And when I did at length fall asleep, the interdiction of the latter resounded in my ears like the knell of St. Paul's great bell. For, alas! reader, I now fancied myself over head and ears in love with Lady Delphine.

CHAPTER VIII.

Figmat's notions upon Sunday parties—I seek to light the lamp of my destiny in Lincoln's Inn, but am as much in the dark as ever—My master consents to my going to Lady Castlerose's—My brother clerks show me they know the world, but I discard their advice, and am laughed at for my pains.

I took care, however, to be down at breakfast half-an-hour before the appointed time; and had not been five minutes in the room ere Sophia made her appearance. After the usual salutation she said, “I long to hear all about the countess and Lady Delphine; mamma tells me you are come back with your head quite turned, and expect to be a great personage. I fear also, Mr. Jessop, that you are disposed to do what is very improper.”

“Improper, Miss Sophia!” replied I, interrupting her.

“Yes,” answered she, “is it not your intention to go out upon Sunday? what would Mr. Rightford say, if he heard such things?”

“I trust,” replied I, “though I do not think it right——”

“Then if you think it wrong, why do it?” rejoined she, quickly. “If you wish to please papa and mamma, I would recommend you to renounce your intention. Pray do not be angry with me for this sermon, but I overheard what they said, and am sure they would be greatly displeased. But,” added she, “now you have been introduced to the fine West-end people, I dare say you will not much care whether papa or mamma are angry or not.”

“You wrong me, Miss Sophia,” answered I. “I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all of you. I stand corrected by your reproof, and will endeavour to excuse myself. But I have promised the countess to play upon the violin, and as she is to introduce me to all the great people, I must take care not to offend her.”

“You can do as you please,” retorted she; “it is very impertinent in a girl like me to advise, but as you will offend papa, and all of us, surely you ought to consider that also.”

“ If it offends you, that is sufficient,” cried I ; “ and to prove to you that I am sincere, I will write to Lady Castlerose and frankly state my scruples.”

“ She will think you a Methodist no doubt,” retorted she, “ but you will have the approbation of your own conscience, and——”

“ So you are returned a red-hot Sunday-party-going Tory,” exclaimed Mr. Figmat, who entered at this moment. “ Just what I expected. I am a straight-forward man, John Jessop. All the Figmats were the same. Our family, by-the-bye, is a devilish deal older than many that have titles tacked to them. I’ll tell you fairly, this won’t do. I expect those who live in my house to conform to its rules. No Sunday jauntings for me. I hate cant and humbug. I’m no crop-ear. None of your tracts and pitch-burn doctrines. But there are six days in the week for junketting and fiddling,—the seventh belongs to our Maker.”

“ I’m sorry, sir,” replied I, as soon as I could thrust in a word, “ to have offended you—but it was my intention to have written an excuse. I hope——”

A cough, which sent a piece of the hung-beef he was devouring nearly into my face, interrupted my hopes, and so he proceeded.

“I am glad of it, for I could not give my consent, and I should be sorry to quarrel upon so short a notice; so no more of that. I suppose you’ve shipped a rare cargo of Tory doctrines: Mrs. Figmat tells me you met Lord Voteburn—I know him and all his family. A hot-bed of corruption; but there’s a rod in pickle for them.”

I thought it prudent not to mention Lord Voteburn’s promise to procure me a place in one of the public offices, but so soon as the opportunity offered, said, “I have to solicit your permission to go this morning to Lincoln’s Inn, to call upon Mr. Robsome.”

“A staunch Whig, and as honest a man as any of his trade; that is not saying very much, however. But what do you want with him?”

“He is the agent employed by my guardians, and has a communication of importance to make to me. I will make up for lost time, sir, by working in the evening, if you will grant my request.”

“Business must be done,” retorted he, “both yours and mine. I am a plain-spoken man: go, but waste no time.”

“And mind you take the road that goes by St. Paul’s,” exclaimed Mrs. Figmat.

“I wish you would speak English, my dear,”

ejaculated her husband, "roads neither go nor come. I should advise him to leave the road behind him, and take a porter; or he will lose himself, and fall into some scrape."

I was not many minutes in profiting by this permission, and in a short time found myself in Lincoln's-inn, where the words "Robsome and Grindwell—First-floor," painted on a door-post, announced the office I was in search of. After threading a passage, as dark and gloomy as the entrance to a fossil cavern, or that of the tombs discovered by Belzoni, in the valley of Beban el Malook, I reached the foot of a staircase furnished with a solitary lamp, which just threw light enough around to show that the walls had not been white-washed since the first building. At length I arrived at the landing-place, where I perceived the celebrated conveyancers' names again painted in large white letters upon a black door: an unnecessary precaution; for the musty effluvia of parchments and old papers would have guided a client as certainly to the spot, as would the fragrant odour of a good kitchen have indicated the entrance to a cook's-shop.

After a moment's pause, I entered a sort of office, where a dozen elderly-looking clerks were occupied at high, ink-stained desks: how they

contrived to execute their task I could not conceive, unless, like owls or bats, their powers of vision were keenest in the dark; for I could scarcely distinguish their features through the dim atmosphere. I stood silently bowing near the entrance for some time before any one noticed me. At last, one of them lifted up his head, thrust his pen mechanically behind his ear, glided off his worm-eaten leather stool, and requested to know the object of my visit.

“I wish to see Mr. Robsome, sir, on important business.”

“Your name, sir?”

“Jessop, sir,” replied I, not knowing how far it might be prudent to betray my real appellation. He then vanished for a few moments, and, when he returned, said, “Mr. Robsome is engaged with a client; but, if you will walk into this room, he will be at your service in a few minutes.”

The chamber into which I was ushered, was worthy of its approaches. It was low and gloomy; its light, though only mid-day, was as dull as that of a November evening; the ceilings were smoke-dried, and fringed with cobwebs; the dust lay so thick upon the piles of papers, deeds, and the few articles of primitive furniture, that a hay-crop might have grown upon

it. Everything in and about the solicitor's sanctum had an air of antiquity and business, which showed that he was of the old school, and that, however wealthy he might be, no portion of his gains were thrown away on those catch-trap decorations which are so often met with in the offices or chambers of modern attorneys.

A side-door now opened, and in walked the lord of the parchment manor. He was a short, dry-looking personage, with a quick, piercing eye, a restless manner, and the air of one who seemed as if every moment not occupied with the pen, which he fidgeted in his hand, was so much money out of his pocket;—he had on an old scratch wig, a coat that would have been disdained by a street-sweeper, a pair of kersey-mere breeches of equal antiquity, worsted stockings, and a general insignificance and meanness of appearance, that ill-accorded with his immense business. After a bow in haste, a nod, and a scrutinising glance with his half-closed eyes, he said, “To which of my clients have I the honour of speaking, and what is your business?”

“Sir,” said I, “you see before you the unfortunate——” His body gave a sort of twitch at this word, and his countenance looked as sour as if he thought I came to borrow money,

or to sue "*in formâ pauperis*." "I am," continued I, "the unfortunate person for whom, it appears, you have a communication of importance—I am Peregrine Penguin."

His features relaxed a little at this, and he replied, "I am glad to see you, sir; owing to my absence from town on election business, your letter, addressed to XX, only reached me yesterday: I have replied to it, however, this morning."

"I assure you, sir," said I, "that every syllable I wrote was strictly true; and, if I did not fear to intrude upon your valuable time, I could satisfy you upon all those points, and produce evidence."

"This is unnecessary," rejoined he; "you are discovered—that is the main feature in our case."

"Dare I ask, sir," replied I, eagerly, "if you are my guardian, and if you can give me any clue to my family?"

"I am not your guardian," replied he, "nor am I acquainted with your family. I was employed by a person interested in your welfare, as the medium of your removal from Devonshire to Thistle-house; and I have been furnished with funds and instructions to provide for you now and hereafter; but I am bound by

the most solemn engagements not to betray my employers, and also to acquaint you, that any effort on your part to discover their name or position, would subject you to the withdrawal of their countenance or assistance."

This was a sad disappointment to my hopes, and fell like a heavy chill upon my heart. After a moment's pause, I answered, "May I not inquire, sir, if you think my parents are alive, or if there is any prospect of my being recognised by them, supposing that by good conduct and the interest that is making for me, I obtain a respectable situation in society?"

"I repeat that it is out of my power to answer either of these questions in a satisfactory manner," was Mr. Robsome's answer; "but this much I may say,—I believe, in the first place, that you are an orphan; and, secondly, from the caution which has been employed in concealing all the circumstances relating to your birth and parentage, I should be inclined to say that it is intended to maintain the same mystery for the future. I shall be frank with you, Mr. Penguin," added the solicitor, "and will therefore advise you not to cherish illusive hopes. It may save you and me much trouble, if I state that the accusation, brought against you by the usher, had no effect on my em-

ployer; but, at the same time, it is expected that you should proceed as soon as possible to India, where a writership is still open for you: such were my last instructions. The funds for your outfit are placed at my disposal, and you will be furnished with letters of credit upon a house at Calcutta to the amount of three hundred a-year."

"But sir," answered I, "if I were to desire to remain in the house of Mr. Figmat, where I have entered as clerk, or if I were to obtain a situation in one of the public offices, would it not be equally satisfactory to the person you speak of? I have been promised such a situation by Lady Castlerose."

"Lady Castlerose!" rejoined Mr. Robsome: "that is singular enough. How did you become acquainted with her? How came her ladyship to take you under her protection? I have always heard that she never performed an act of this kind except for the purpose of forwarding her political intrigues."

"I need not say, sir," answered I, "that the accusation is unjust as far as I am concerned." I then narrated what had passed on the previous evening, as well as such preceding circumstances as had led to my introduction to the countess, and terminated by earnestly ex-

pressing a hope that I might be allowed to remain where I was, or to accept Lady Castle-rose's offer, and then, instead of requiring three hundred a-year, I should be content with any trifle which might be allowed me.

"I cannot take upon myself to return a definite answer," replied the solicitor; "nor can I give you much hope that your request will be attended to; I will communicate it, however, in the proper quarter: some time will probably elapse before I can receive a reply. In the meantime, you cannot do better than remain with Mr. Figmat. You are at liberty to draw upon me for a couple of hundred pounds for present wants; and, if you require advice, call or write as often as you please. I assure you that I have long been much interested in your fate, and have regretted that your unnecessary fears should have exposed you to tribulation which might have been avoided, had you remained at Mr. Birchell's." He then opened a cash-box, and, taking forth some bank-notes, said, "You, of course, stand in need of funds. It is your duty to repay Mr. Rightford the money he has advanced, and to decline any farther aid from him: you can do this at once, and I will get the letter franked."

I did as he directed, and, having finished

my letter, and received fifty pounds, took my leave.

I no sooner returned, than my master and mistress eagerly inquired the result of my interview with the solicitor; and both seemed to sympathise in my disappointment. The instant the former heard the issue of my interview with Mr. Robsome, he said, "I see through the whole business: it's as plain as the custom-house mark. Harkee, Penguin, since that's the name they give you: I am a plain-spoken man; I wouldn't say a word to hurt your feelings for the first pick of the market; but I see what it is. You're the son of some ne'er-do-well lord or baronet, who has neither the heart to abandon you, nor the honesty to come forward like a man, and do you justice. I am a straightforward man, and hate long speeches, as you pretty well know; so, all I have got to say, is, I like you, and I will stick by you, if your head does not get turned by West-end nonsense. Stay where you are: you may go farther, and fare worse."

One of the clerks now put in his head, and announced that a gentleman, upon business, was waiting in the counting-house, which cut the thread of my worthy master's speech, and left the remainder to his wife. Whether it was that she was pleased with the readiness I had shown

in renouncing my Sunday invitation, or that the natural goodness of the female heart, which is always ready to sympathise with the unhappy, prevailed over less generous sentiments, matters little, but all her kindness now seemed to have returned.

“I am sorry for your disappointment, Mr. Penguin,” said she, “and shall be still more sorry to lose you. You’ve only been here a short time, but I’m a pretty good judge of character: we have had a score of clerks in our time, but none that has pleased me so much as you. What I think, I out with, plump; so there’s the truth; and, although I don’t often agree with Mr. Figmat, I go hand-in-hand with him in this. But I have only to say that if you stay with us, and conduct yourself properly, you’ll find us behave like a father and mother to you.”

“So you are going to India, are you?” said Sophia, in a tone that seemed to express regret.

“Not if I can avoid it,” replied I: “it is my earnest wish to remain where I am: the goodness which your parents have shown towards me adds to the disinclination I feel to quitting England.”

“Is that true, Mr. Penguin?” asked she. “Supposing you were not to go to India, would

you not gladly accept the countess's offer of the place you told mamma of? Papa now——" Here she paused.

"I know what you were going to say," replied I; "but if you meant to intimate that my disappointment in not discovering my parents would make any difference in my feelings towards you all, then it is very unjust and unkind of you to think so. I dare not say all I feel; but I hope it will not offend you, Miss Sophia, if I honestly declare that I am proud of looking up to Mr. and Mrs. Figmat as to a father and mother; and I hope you will not be too proud to permit me to regard you with all the respectful gratitude of a brother."

Although my thoughts were principally in Bruton Street, instead of remaining amongst the bills of lading, invoices, and commercial letters, which were given me to copy, I worked hard until dinner, and in the evening resumed my labours, to the great satisfaction of my master. Not venturing to ask permission to go to the West-end, I wrote an account of my interview with Mr. Robsome to Lady Delphine, and accompanied it with a note for her aunt, in which I expressed my regret that I was prevented accepting her invitation, because it was against Mr. Figmat's rules to allow any of his family to

dine out upon Sundays. Upon showing this letter to my master, to my astonishment, he tapped me in a friendly manner on the back, and said, " You heard my opinions, this morning, about sabbath keeping. I approve your readiness to attend to my wishes ; but things are altered. You've been thrown over by those whose duty it is to adopt and introduce you, so you must not lose the opportunity of doing that for yourself. Perhaps the dissolute fellow may be at your elbow, and may repent. I waive my objections, therefore, to your going, for this once. Remember, however, custom does not make law: I can't spare you during the week, as there is a press of business, so, if you can fiddle yourself into the good graces of the lords and ladies, after evening service, next Sunday, let them pay the piper, and you must carry the amount to the debit of your own conscience."

" I thank you, sir," answered I, " but I will not avail myself of your kindness, if, by so doing, I am likely to offend Mrs. Figmat."

A cough like the report of a pistol cut me short, and told me that his decisions were law. I am ashamed to add that my own scruples did not stand much in my way ; indeed, so intent was I upon the anticipated pleasure, that I purchased

a violin, which I found at a broker's shop. Bearing in mind what Lady Delphine had said about people fiddling themselves into society, and having no occasion for money for my ordinary wants, I was very particular in the choice of the instrument, on which depended my reputation, and thus expended half the sum received from the lawyer. I then procured some old but celebrated and difficult solo music in Cheapside, mounted up to my attic, and passed almost all my spare time in practising.

Sunday at length arrived, and, by way of pleasing Sophia and her mother, and securing a set-off to my conscience, I attended morning and evening service, during which, I must honestly confess, that my mind wandered most irreverently from heavenly to terrestrial subjects. Once I caught myself reading the marriage ceremony instead of the litany; another time I had nigh thrown the whole of the charity-school into confusion by breaking out into a passage of *così fan tutti*, instead of sticking to the metre of the psalms: and, to crown all, to the especial scandal of Mrs. Figmat and Sophia, utterly forgot, not only the purport of the sermon, but even the text. I believe they both thought me a lost man; but they merely

contented themselves with repeating the latter, and begging me to write it out.

The dressing hour at last struck, and, this time, I bestowed more than ordinary pains upon my person, and, vain as my assertion may appear, I had every reason to be contented with the result. I conclude that Sophia had also overcome her scruples; for, when I produced the kid gloves she had given me, nicely re-touched with India rubber, she went to a rose-tree, presented to her by young Mr. Windfall, and, cutting off one of its prettiest buds, told me to put it in my button-hole. Ungrateful wretch that I was! I did so; but with the aforethought malice of transferring it to Lady Delphine.

I must not omit to observe, that two of my colleagues in the counting-house, who had become acquainted with a young nobleman, at a bull-bait, and had been invited to dine with his lordship and some other dog-fanciers, at Stevens's coffee house, had laughed at me upon the preceding evening for my punctuality. Pretending to have a perfect knowledge of "high life," and the habits of young men of fashion, some of whom frequented the Westminster cock-pit, they talked of them abruptly by their names, or designated them as George, Tom, or Bob.

“Hearkee, Jessop,” said one of them, “old Squash’s flash about punctuality, and all that, is nothing but my eye and Betty Martin.”

“All moonshine,” added the second, as he played with a large pinchbeck broach, representing two bruisers.

“Yes, my kiddy,” proceeded the first, taking out a spy-glass, which, he said, had been given to him by a columbine, at Sadler’s wells : “yes, you’ll be booked as a proper slow-coach, if you’re there until at least an hour too late—half-price like, that’s the time of day.”

“Especially on Sundays,” added his companion, “because that’s the day when all the West-end swells meet at Tattersall’s, to look at the cattle and chaff about fights and races.”

“A man might as well chuck his bunch of fives into another’s ogles,” echoed the first, “as go to dinner, as one comes to time at a mill.”

I thanked them for their counsel with a full determination not to follow it. I was anxious to arrive in Bruton Street at the appointed hour, not only from the dread I felt of walking into a room full of strangers, but in the hope of enjoying a few minutes’ conversation with Lady Delphine, before the rest of the company arrived. The consequence was, that I and my

fiddle disembarked at Lady Castlerose's precisely as St. George's clock struck seven—a punctuality not much expected by the domestics, and still less by the noble hostess; for, at the moment I jumped out of the hackney coach, carrying about my ancles as much forage as would have littered her ladyship's stable, her carriage drew up. I stepped to hand her out, with my fiddle under my arm and my hat in my hand. She burst into a fit of laughter, and said, "You had better deposit your cremona in doors, or I shall have an admonition from the bishop for encouraging street-players upon Sundays."

She then good-naturedly took my arm, and, pointing to the drawing-room door, as she mounted the upper stair-case, told me she would send Lady Delphine, to help me to pass away the time until she herself was dressed.

CHAPTER IX.

Containing much fashionable chit-chat—Some new characters are introduced—Their opinions upon nosegays, drinking healths, duelling, and other grave matter, which you need not read unless you like it—An ingenious receipt for making up for a short sitting.

LADY DELPHINE had, however, anticipated her aunt's wishes. When I entered, I found her in readiness to receive me. Whether this was accident or design, I know not. After the first salutation, I made up my mind to present her the rose, but my hands seemed petrified, and I had not the courage to lift them to my button-hole. At length, like a person who shuts his eyes and pulls a trigger, I made a snatch at the poor flower, and, blushing a much deeper scarlet than the rose itself, I drew it forth, saying, "I

hoped her ladyship would do me the honour to accept it." To my great satisfaction, she took it from me with a graceful smile, and placed it in her sash; observing, that it was very kind of me to think of her, and that I could not afford her greater pleasure than by giving her a rose, that being her favourite flower. I was wondrously flattered at this, and, with the natural vanity of my species, interpreted this acceptance, and her mode of disposing of it, as a proof of her not being indifferent to me.

I was upon the point of hazarding some compliments, in return, when the door opened, and a handsome young man, dressed in the extreme of the fashion, was announced, under the title of Sir Wyndham Lightairs. I candidly avow that I wished him blown to the world's end, especially when, after the first exchange of salutations between him and Lady Delphine, he turned a very supercilious look upon me, and whispered in her ear, "Who is your friend? I have forgotten him." To which she replied, "Your memory must not be blamed, for you never before saw him; therefore, although it is rather a solecism in fashionable etiquette to introduce people, I must present you. Sir Wyndham Lightairs, an intimate friend of my brother, Mr. Penguin"——

Upon this the baronet condescended to make a sort of distant nod, again whispered something about "an odd bird," then observing the flower I had given to Lady Delphine, said, "What a lovely rose ! dare I venture to ask what fortunate creature has been favoured by the installation of his offering in that envied sanctuary ?"

"Why, I will satisfy your curiosity so far," replied she, "by saying that it was a person to whom I am indebted for the honour of being enabled to listen to your fine speeches."

"Rather enigmatical, but I suppose I must wait for 'the word' till the next number. In the meantime, by my honour, I'm as jealous as the *Turco en Italia*. I am the unluckiest mortal in the world. I ordered a whole forest of rose-bushes from Lee's; and only fancy my preposterous Italian greyhound taking it into his head to ferret them all out of their pots, excepting half-a-dozen which I saved for you; but in my excessive hurry to get into the carriage to apologise for forgetting to be ready last night to hand you out of the opera, my iniquitous valet forgot to remind me of them. I shall turn him away and never forgive myself."

"O pray do not distress the poor man or yourself," replied Lady Delphine, with a malicious look; "I assure you I forgive you both."

“That is intensely kind of you,” answered he :
“but I swear I’m egregiously jealous.”

“Then I’ve some hopes of you, Lightairs,” exclaimed a gentleman who had entered the suite of rooms, and approached close to us without being perceived. “With your philosophical knack of forgetting everything and everybody excepting yourself, I should have thought you would scarce have memory sufficient to remember to be jealous.”

“I flatter my unsophisticated individual that I have not often cause for jealousy, Colonel Hardmain,” retorted the baronet; “nature has not forgotten me, and that dubious creature, Fortune, has been good enough to bear me in mind. Mothers, the newspapers say, constantly think of me for their daughters, and daughters, according to the same authority, which I have some reason to believe correct, think of me for themselves.”

Although I saw the colonel and Lady Delphine smiling at the fop’s vanity, and was half inclined to laugh, I listened attentively.

“But,” continued he, “these sort of things do not annoy me. I forget them as one does a disagreeable engagement. But I am absolutely annoyed, irrevocably distressed—which is

the greatest proof I can remember of Lady Delphine's magnetic influence."

"Really it is hardly fair in you to quiz me so unmercifully," rejoined her ladyship, smiling. "I hope you will forget it."

"Hey-day," said the colonel, "what does all this mean? Has Sir Wyndham committed the astonishing novelty of forgetting himself."

"Precisely so—or rather *not* precisely so; for it was in a great measure that horrid numskull, my dresser's fault. Egad, I believe the caitiff is in love. The birbante, I will teach him to love nothing but my neckcloths and blacking. I hate thinking for myself."

"You should call him your remembrancer then, and carry him about with you as a sort of walking note-book."

"I cannot say I ever would have given a penny for your thoughts, but if others think for you," said the colonel, with a sarcastic smile, "they may become marketable. But you have not told me the cause of the green-eyed monster's intrusion."

"A rose," replied Sir Wyndham, with a very zephyr-like sigh, and a languishing look directed towards Lady Delphine's sash.

"What, the old proverb verified," responded Colonel Hardmain: "with a thorn, eh?"

“A whole forest of thorns,” answered the other.

“Call it by any other name,” rejoined Lady Delphine, with a serious air, “it will smell as sweet.”

“I deny it—I deny it,” retorted Sir Wyndham; “forgive the expression, but it stinks in my very nostrils.”

“Poor rose!” replied she, “would you have me throw it away, to reward your thinker’s remissness!”

“O no! that would be most unjust,” exclaimed the colonel. That would be too great a recompense even for a man of Sir Wyndham’s pre-eminent merit. Besides, as he has forgotten that which another has more wisely remembered, it would be hard to reward him at the expense of a more retentive memory.”

I thought the colonel the wisest and most upright judge I had ever heard of, and paid great attention to him as he proceeded.

“I confess I always envied Lightairs until now; but I am not surprised at his feeling jealous. I do not pretend to be inquisitive, but whoever had the honour of presenting you with that rose, Lady Delphine, he is to be envied. I am somewhat past the age of romance, but I recollect the time when the gift

or acceptance of a flower would have made my heart vibrate for a year."

"Why a flower?" demanded Lady Delphine, "surely any other trifling gift from those we like must be equally gratifying."

"I beg your pardon," rejoined the colonel: "there is something in flowers that carry with them a charm, which cannot be derived from any other present."

"And why should this be?" asked Lady Delphine; "since flowers are perishable and easily obtained!"

"Flowers have only a moral value, and thence the acceptance must be disinterested."

"Egad!" said Sir Wyndham, "he speaks like the oracle of Delphos: I never remember anything which so exactly expressed my sentiments, though I confess I like substantials."

"I know not what you feel," retorted the colonel, "but I have enjoyed more pleasure from seeing a violet or rose worn by her I loved, than in more costly gifts which have added to the lustre of her appearance. I say nothing of the delight, the secret enjoyment of carefully preserving the flower, nay, the flower's leaf, received from her who, I hoped, returned my affection. There is an inexplicable mystery in this; for it is not the same thing with artificial

objects. I have not cared to find the brilliant production of the artist torn and neglected; but if a leaf was cast away from my rose, or a petal from my violet, O! I have had sad twinges and searings; and have departed with my heart as much withered and blighted, as though that heart, and not the flower, had been trampled beneath her feet."

"I fear," said Lady Delphine, "that if we were to analyse this sentiment we should find it to be founded principally upon vanity and self-love."

"How so?" demanded Sir Wyndham: "surely nothing can be more devoid of self than the present of a pink or carnation, that costs neither money nor trouble."

"True," she replied, "so far as that sacrifice goes. But in proportion as the absolute value is trifling; in proportion as the article is devoid of intrinsic worth, the more are we disposed to think its acceptance is connected with our own merits."

This observation was rather a blow to my vanity, but it was obviously my wisest plan not to appear to feel it.

"Certainly," said the colonel, "and therefore you are becoming the apologist of my doctrine. Present a necklace of pearls, or any such trinket

to a woman, and, whatever she may think of you, the jewel divides, if it does not entirely absorb, her affections. Nay, I will be bound to say that before she has worn it half-a-dozen times, the maker is thought of much oftener than the donor. But this cannot be the case with a withered flower. And I am honest enough to confess that I have two or three still in my possession, which were given to me by beloved persons who are now either dead, or morally dead, to me. I have other gifts also from them, which have their moral value. But I would not exchange one of those blighted, discoloured remembrances of the past, for the value of their originals modelled in diamonds."

"O my dear colonel, that is *un poco forte*! I get whole nursery gardens of carnations given to me, but the moment the first blush is off, I make them over to my dresser."

"I, on the contrary, cherish them as I do the remembrance of those who gave them: blooming and fragrant, they represented their graces and goodness,—withered and reduced almost to dust, they serve me as epitaphs, they remind me of the fragility of life and the evanescence of all our hopes and affections."

"Here comes one that may serve your turn," said the colonel, as a very overdressed, dry,

painted lady, followed by her husband, who looked like an honest country gentleman, were announced as Sir Dominick and Lady Hydrogen.

“Quite early!” exclaimed the former, “Lady Castlerose not dressed! Enchanted at this. Thought I never should get away. Overwhelmed with literary business. I have had that honest man, Mr. Popnought, reading his ‘Ponderings’—and most ponderous they are. A sort of sentimental tour through the United States; and so detestably whiggish. Talks of their senators, representatives, and judges, as if they were Chathams, Pitts, and Eldons. Is enthusiastic about their rivers, forests, and scenery. Says that their public buildings are models of architecture, and their private abodes models of hospitality. He praises the good sense of some of their men, and is stark mad about the beauty of all their women.”

“I envy your memory, my dear Lady Hydrogen,” exclaimed the baronet: “but then you know you work for the reviews. By-the-bye, talking of that, I must not forget that we are to have one upon Hounslow-heath next week—it will be delicious.”

“What?” demanded the colonel.

“Why, a review of the household troops,” replied Sir Wyndham.

The blue-stockings lady turned up her nose at the idea of anything so mundane being coupled with her literary occupations, and was about to resume, when Colonel Hardmain said, "I've heard from the publishers that there are some sets-off to Mr. Popnought's brilliant descriptions, which do not reflect much credit upon his views of the rights of hospitality. They tell me he got himself introduced, by hook or by crook, into different houses; and while he lavishes the most fulsome praise upon some, he most vilely bespatters others. And this not always with that strict regard to graphic fidelity which we have a right to expect from a traveller whose opinions are to be conveyed to foreign countries, and may prove injurious to the character or credit of the individuals spoken of."

"Fair criticism, nothing else," exclaimed Lady Hydrogen; "that's the only part of the work that pleased me. I hate the Yankees."

"I wish I could see my dinner," ejaculated Sir Dominick, in a half-whisper to the baronet.

"You shall be gratified immediately," said Lady Castlerose, who glided into the room at that moment; "I only expect two or three people more, and—here they are."

A loud knock proclaimed the arrival of the

guests, who, by their entering as the clock struck eight, appeared to have studied at my colleague's school of punctuality. During the few minutes that intervened before dinner was announced the conversation took a general turn. The blue-stockings lady talked of new books, the baronet of new boots, and the rest about the opera and a recent elopement. At length I found myself seated at the round table down stairs, and was accidentally placed between Lady Hydrogen and Colonel Hardmain, to both of whom Lady Castlerose presented me as a friend of Lord Eaglehurst, in whom she felt a deep interest.

I will not exhaust the reader's patience with a detail of all the splendid plate, porcelain, Saxon linen, and ornaments that glittered around: nor attempt to furnish a list of the dishes, all of which were dignified either with the names of some great French statesman or soldier, or had other appellations equally extraordinary. Excepting, however, one large piece of roast beef, which I heard designated as "a piece of resistance;" out of derision, I suppose, for it was not long in succumbing to the united assaults of Sir Dominick and others. This appeared the more strange, since all the while the guests were trying to prove the frailty of

the noble joint, they were most ungratefully abusing English cooking. Had they merely assaulted the worthy surloin to show their animosity to such homely British fare, it would have been all very comprehensible; but while they did nothing but praise French gastronomy they seemed to devote their whole affections to the national dish.

“What a charming thing,” said my female neighbour to me, after she had satisfied the first cravings of her appetite, (for blues have appetites as well as blacks or whites,) “to be edited by so popular a person as Lady Castlerose? It is quite sufficient to ensure a fashionable reception, especially when got up with a pleasing frontispiece.”

I was about to bow, and thank her for the compliment, when my right-hand neighbour said, “You forget the most important requisite for ensuring success.”

“What is that?” demanded the other.

“The title,” answered he, “I fear that in our days a new production has little chance of success, unless it be ushered in with a high sounding name.”

From the good-natured manner in which Colonel Hardmain had previously spoken to me, I could not suppose that he intended to

exercise his wit at my expense; so I continued to eat in silence, being I confess more anxious to catch the eye of Lady Delphine, than the words of Lady Hydrogen; "I grant you," replied the latter, "that a good title, whether to a book, an estate, or a man, is essential in the eye of the world: but we philosophers rise above these things; if we find merit——"

"In the binding?" demanded the Colonel, with a malicious look at Sir Wyndham.

"Dear me," replied her ladyship, "he puts one in mind of a splendidly bound blotting book."

"With this difference," rejoined the colonel, "that your blotting book absorbs and retains the traces of all it comes in contact with."

"Yes," retorted she, "but the traces are illegible, and as much *sans dessus dessous*! as his brains." The colonel smiled, and her ladyship, evidently much pleased at her repartee, resumed, "As I was saying, if we find intrinsic merit in a production, we overlook all minor defects, and treat them as one does errors of the press which a more careful revision may efface. There is something very captivating in titles, but very often we find them like the fronts of the houses run up by Potemkin to deceive Catharine."

“You might carry your simile further,” rejoined the colonel, “by comparing the plagiarisms and unproductiveness of their contents, to the poor serfs, whom the wily favourite moved about in post-waggons, in order to complete the delusion.”

“Post-octavo copies of the population,” replied Lady Hydrogen, who seemed determined to have the last word:—then turning to me, she condescendingly said, “I hear from Lady Castlerose, that you have had some very extraordinary adventures—shall you publish?—Not of age yet? I will give you a title—“Memoirs of a Minor,”—it would take immensely—the world is mad about memoirs: publish, and I will do you a preface.”

I longed to tell her I wished she could give me a name before she thought of a title: but I answered frankly, “I assure your ladyship that I would rather conceal than publish my adventures, which have nothing extraordinary in them, and are such as occur every day to hundreds of young persons, who have the misfortune to be placed in the same position as myself.”

“Excessively modest, and thence more likely to be meritorious and full of interest,” replied she.

This appeared very kind, and I began to

think that learned ladies were by no means so alarming as they are generally depicted. I was going to answer, when her ladyship's attention was attracted to Sir Wyndham, who said, "Lady Hydrogen, I entirely forgot to supplicate the honour of drinking a glass of wine with you."

The glasses were filled, they bowed, and then Lady Hydrogen observed, "By-the-bye, what an absurd English etiquette! that one cannot quench one's thirst without asking, or being invited to drink."

"What we call pairing off," observed Sir Dominick, "quite as useful at dinner when one is thirsty, as it is in the House when one is sleepy."

"With this difference, that the one follows a debate, and the other often leads to it," said the colonel.

"By-the-bye, Lady Castlerose," said Sir Wyndham, "you're a judge of perfect things, *cosa dice* of my under—"

"Standing, do you mean?" said Colonel Hardmain, drily.

"If you allude to those sections of my nether man which enjoy the satisfaction of stretching themselves under our delightful hostess's mahogany, I flatter myself they are like good wine,

they need no bush. If," continued he, twirling one of the curls that ornamented his handsome forehead; "you allude to this portion of my individual——"

"Which is like a bush, over an empty barrel," retorted the colonel.

"I don't remember ever to have met with a more delicious creature," answered the baronet, with imperturbable good-nature; "take care, however, that I don't load my barrel, and commence bush-fighting—you know I can hit desperate hard."

"Well then," answered Lady Delphine, who feared the sarcastic colonel might answer by something yet more severe, "I will challenge you in champagne."

"And much as I abhor duelling, I will be your second," said Sir Dominick. "One would think we were sitting in a committee of privileges."

"Instead of a *cour d'amour*," interposed the baronet, casting a very languishing glance, first at the rings which adorned his fingers, and then at Lady Delphine; "so let us talk of something else. Did you hear of Miss Splash-ton's adventure?"

"Tell us all about it upstairs," said Lady Castlerose: "several people are come—besides,

I am determined to try if I cannot abolish, at least in this house, that most unsocial, ungallant custom of forcing us poor women to sit for hours by ourselves, whilst you men remains ‘poculating,’ as Sir Wyndham calls it.”

“And *perche non?*” retorted the baronet. “If I recollect me right, we have poculent—fit to drink: why not adopt poculate—fit or ready to drink?”

“Because it is heteroclital, and deviates too much from the root. We etymologists always adhere to the root,” replied Lady Hydrogen.

“I leave roots to hermits,” replied Sir Wyndham: “give me fruits; these grapes are delicious.”

“But roots produce branches,” said Lady Delphine, smiling: “I confess that I am not adverse to the introduction of new words, which may at first sound strange, but which express a given meaning with greater brevity and more force than their equivalents in what we call pure Saxon.”

“You are right,” said Colonel Hardmain; “I hold it to be hypercritical for a nation which speaks a composite language like our’s to cavil at the introduction of Gallicisms, Hellenisms, and so forth, especially as our language is entirely derived from foreign sources, and is daily enriched by fresh adoptions.”

"Little as I like the Americans," exclaimed Lady Hydrogen, "we shall soon find that their boast of speaking purer English than we do will be fully accomplished. When they want a new word they compose it as the Greeks did, out of the elements within their immediate reach. They do not travel into France or Germany for assistance."

"*Cospello!*" ejaculated Lightairs, "but they speak an egregiously coarse jargon: if you cut us off from France and Italy, we shall degenerate into absolute barbarism."

"I agree with Lady Hydrogen," said the countess, "and the proof of our not requiring further foreign aid is, that our old authors never condescended to such quackery. Even those of a more modern date, such as Addison, Gibbon, and Richardson, are equally distinguished for their purity."

"Aye, but new wants require new words," rejoined Hardmain, "and I see no sort of objection to our importing them, as we do any new art that may suit our purpose."

The countess now bowed to the ladies, took Sir Wyndham's arm and proceeded up stairs, much to the discontent of Sir Dominick, who had as sincere a dislike to the introduction of foreign customs, as his wife pretended to have

to foreign words. To obviate this evil, as far as possible, the worthy knight had taken care to double the number of glasses usually allotted to each guest at dessert: these he filled whenever the bottles passed, with claret, port, and sherry. By this ingenious stratagem, three revolutions of the decanters nearly furnished him with the modicum of wine, without which he told me he could not combat his old enemy, the gout. This appeared an odd remedy for such a complaint, but as I was no doctor, I did not disagree, and followed him to the drawing-room door, where a crowd of fashionable personages were already assembled for the evening party—an account of which must be reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

In which the philosopher, as well as votary of fashion, will perhaps find something to his mind—I meet with an old friend, and more than one new face—Is it a spirit blessed, or goblin damned?—That will be shown hereafter—In the mean time my hopes and fears are very unequally balanced.

To you, O aristocratic, fashionable reader—if, indeed, these pages are ever destined to fall into such exalted hands, the mere gliding into a long suite of drawing-rooms, brilliantly illuminated, and rapidly filling with the purest essences that can be extracted from the Sunday alembic of rank, power, wealth and beauty, may appear most natural and unembarrassing.

I say Sunday alembic: for all the world knows that infinitely greater severity is exercised by the givers of Sunday parties, in the selection of their guests, than by those who receive their

acquaintance upon other days. Whether this proceeds from an opinion, that the better the day the better ought to be the deed, and, consequently, the more perfect the contributors; or whether, having before their eyes the penalties that await those who transgress the sabbath, they think it a part of their privilege to be damned in choice company, is a casuistical question, not to be decided by me; but certain it is, that the Leviathans of fashionable society are alone pricked out upon these occasions, and that the smaller fry are left either to indulge in scandal and domestic squabbles, by their own fire-sides, or to lose their money at clubs, as best suits their divers tastes and dispositions. I do not include more orthodox or becoming occupations; for, had I the subtle power of Asmodeus, and were thus enabled to penetrate into the Sunday evening privacy of the great mass of people who resort to London for the season, few, I fear, would be found employed in anything more accordant with the sanctity of the day.

The effect produced by these distillations, is not, however, without its ultimate moral benefit. Heaven knows whether the elect are made an iota worse—perhaps not; but often the excluded become considerably better. How bet-

ter? you will ask. The reply is simple. As soon as the heart-burnings, jealousies, and disappointments, which many of them feel at not having been invited, are overcome; as soon as they have obtained sufficient command over their ill-humour to conceal it, then they hold it necessary to proclaim to the world, that they never go out upon Sundays,—that they think it sinful, papistical: and thank their stars that Lady this, or the Countess t’other, has had the good taste to spare them the pain of being supposed capable of forgetting their Christian duties. Then, in order to sustain their reputation for goodness and consistency, they henceforth consider these duties to consist in abstaining, upon Sundays, from all diversion, no matter how innocent, and in railing, during the other six days, against all those who permit themselves greater doctrinal latitude.

I shall be stigmatised as a scoffer and free-thinker, for advancing such heterodox opinions: but experience has shown that petty contrarieties and mortifications of this and similar kinds, are often more instrumental in rendering people “good,” than all the moral lessons inculcated by other means. There is no rule, however, without its exceptions: nay, logicians have determined that the exception

maketh the rule, in the same manner that theory is based upon practice. Many are there, without doubt, who, acting upon conscientious grounds and early precepts, eschew what they deem improper, although it be within their grasp. In this there is merit—the greatest merit—that of resisting temptation; for without temptation to commit evil, there is no great glory in acting right, or, at all events, in not falling into error: glory consists in conquest. There can be no conquest without a struggle; and of all conquests, none is so honourable as those obtained over oneself. To refuse that for which we have neither appetite nor inclination, or what is perhaps beyond our reach, is an easy task; but to deny ourselves that which accords with our tastes, and is within our power, merely from a strict sense of duty, is a noble and praiseworthy effort. Thus there is infinitely greater morality and virtue in those who say, “I should like to go here or there, or to enjoy this or that gratification, but abstain because my conscience forbids,” than in those who exclaim, “I have no fancy for such an indulgence,” and thence decline it; or, what is not unfrequent, who condemn others for yielding to temptations which are not offered to themselves. Besides, when one sees the dissipated Philander abruptly aban-

doning Newmarket for the new light, or when the gay Flaminia suddenly deserts the frivolities of this world, to cast herself into ascetic speculations upon the next, and when one finds them condemning this or that practice as sinful, which a few days before they had applauded as innocent—then one may be pardoned for distrusting the sincerity of their principles, or, at all events, for attributing their conversion to some of those re-actions of wounded vanity or disappointed self-love, which so often assail those who embark upon the wayward sea of fashion.

But I must return to you, whom I addressed before I fell into this luminous digression. Accustomed as you are from early childhood to the splendour of your luxuriant homes, and by insensible degrees initiated into all the magnificence and lustre of the great world, the sight that met my eyes might probably have produced no more effect than would an ordinary theatrical pageant upon a monarch, cradled in all the realities of life's extremest glories. You probably feel no emotion at the multitude of bright and blooming faces, at the sparkling jewels, at the buzzing, fluttering, waving of the splendid crowds whom you encounter in a gay assembly;—you feel no embarrassment, as you pause for a mo-

ment to sip the honey from this fair flower, or, zephyr-like, to waft a compliment to that, still fairer;—you are amongst congenial spirits—amongst those who are known to you, who are your equals in fortune, rank, or position,—those who seek you with outstretched hands and smiling greetings—those who wish for you, and perhaps court you. You are feared possibly, and thence the more worshipped,—you are beloved perhaps, and thence the more feared,—you have the reputation of being a dangerous man, and thence more readily find other victims,—your eye soon lights upon the sympathetic eye you search for,—you wade through the crowd with the indifference with which a swan breasts the rippling waters, and, throwing yourself into some corner, forget everything but your object, no matter whether that be love or politics, honourable or immoral:—every face is familiar to you, and, what is less agreeable, every anecdote equally so. The drawing-room is your birth-right or your victory. Whether there *par droit de conquête ou par droit de naissance*, you are at ease, at home,—yes, often more “at home” than the lady whom you honour with your presence, in virtue of that laconic and peculiarly-British invitation.

You cannot, therefore, comprehend the min-

gled sensations of estrangement, trepidation, and even loneliness, that oppressed me when I found myself amidst the whirlpool of unknown faces, and heard, from my station near the door, the confusion of sounds that rose around me, as the groom of the chambers successively announced each coming guest. What added to my painful feelings was, that I did not pass unnoticed. I was quickly remarked, glanced at, and commented upon as a new importation. How could this be otherwise? I was an humble out-door plant, a forest shrub, suddenly transported amidst a choice collection of the rarest roses and carnations.

Some of these conjectures reached my ears in broken whispers. A few were flattering, others far from complimentary. "Who is that good-looking young man near the door?" said one lady, fixing me with her glass. "One of the musical people, I believe," replied a gentleman, or some foreign *chevalier d'industrie*. "You know Lady Castlerose's passion for patronising the arts."

"You are partly right," said another, in whom I recognised one of my elder school-fellows at Thistle-house, but who did not condescend to recognise me; "he is a *protégé* of the house, and *entre nous*, it is said that he is

a son of"—the rest of the speech was inaudible.

"Well," replied the lady, "I should not be surprised; there is something very aristocratic and gentlemanly in his look."

"I confess I do not see that, nor even the slightest family likeness," answered the first gentleman, "and generally one finds some resemblance to the old stock, in the produce of these left-handed marriages."

"Do you know him, Sir William?" demanded the lady.

"I was at school with him at Dr. Birchel's," replied the other, "and know he came from a Devonshire workhouse; and that is *quantum suff.* for not knowing him now."

"Egad, I think you are wrong," ejaculated his friend; "for he must be a clever fellow to commence by working himself out of a place, where so many others end their labours."

"All I know is, that he arrived one fine morning at the school,—knocked down Springwood, played the fiddle, learned French and the classics quicker than any of us—bore flogging and tormenting with the stoicism of a Cherokee Indian; wrote verses on a villanous usher, who had got up a case with our pedagogue's odious wife; saved Toryville from drowning; made a

slight mistake between *meum and tuum*; ran away, and became king of the gipsies."

"I suppose," answered the other "Lady Hydrogen has discovered this; for I heard her say that she intends to tiger him about, and we are to have his adventures, edited by her ladyship."

"Apropos of tigers," exclaimed the other, "do you recollect the affair of the monkey and panther at Frogmore?"

"Certainly, and envied the brute the pleasure of saving Lady Delphine."

"Well then, *ecce homo*."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, Lady Castlerose told me, in strict confidence, that the supposed monkey was no other than this new edition of Moore Carew."

"O I must know him!" said the lady; "I never heard of anything so romantic. There is Lady Hydrogen; she shall introduce me. I have a party on Thursday: we intend getting up *charades en action*, and *tableaux vivants*." And so saying she pushed her way across the room towards the blue.

At this moment a name was announced that thrilled through my veins. I started forward, and forgetting where I was, regardless of the persons around, sprang to the head of the

staircase to meet Monsieur de Florennes. The good old man recognised me instantly, and returned my greeting with all the affection of a parent. After the first moment of mutual effusion, after expressing his joy at seeing me restored to society, he told me that he had just returned from Russia, where he had been despatched upon a mission relating to Louis XVIII., and that he had taken the privilege of old friendship to pay his respects to Lady Castlerose, without being invited, and was to proceed to Hartwell upon the following morning.

The reception de Florennes met with from Lady Castlerose and her niece, was most cordial. The former, eager to ascertain the result of his mission, which was connected with those great events immediately preceding the termination of the last war, drew him into a corner, and left me to converse with Lady Delphine. I could not long enjoy this pleasure, however, being quickly cast into the background by a succession of young men who gathered around her. But my eyes wandered constantly in that direction, and now and then encountered hers. When they did not, I felt disappointed; and when they did, I had no reason to be much flattered; for there was something in their calm and steady expression

that bespoke none of that trepidation which animated mine. Hers was a look of protection and grateful kindness; but not of a more tender sentiment.

As no one spoke to, though many stared at me, I had no alternative but to shrink back and meditate upon my own feelings.

As I was mechanically turning over the leaves of the music books, that were piled upon the piano, in readiness for the favourite singer of the day, who had not yet arrived, I overheard the following dialogue between two young men, who stood close to my side.

“ So,” said one of them, “ Lady Delphine is to marry Lord Gamblebill; I hear, from excellent authority, that the whole affair——”

“ Will be an affair *manquée*,” interposed the first speaker.

“ How so?”

“ Why, she is in love with a *quidam*.”

“ I have heard of people swearing all manner of oaths, and being in love with all kinds of strange creatures, but I cannot conjecture what you mean.”

“ O nothing can be more simple—a poor devil without fortune.”

“ Who is the caitiff?” demanded the first gentleman.

Ridiculous as it may appear, I felt a secret hope that my name was about to be pronounced.

“Harry Goldfringe of the guards,” replied the other, “he is mad about her—he was caught the other night in the pastoral act of chiselling out her name upon a sentry box, and was put in arrest for taking the rounds to Bruton Street instead of Carlton-house gardens. But, what is still better, he got himself into a scrape with his old governor, by the same mistake attributed to one Rufus, in Martial’s epigrams.”

“What was that? my classic reading does not carry me far enough back.”

“Why Harry wanted some money, and so in a fit of distraction—

“He wrote a letter to his father ending with this line. I am, my lovely Delphine, ever thine.”

“*Si non e vero, e ben trovato*,” replied the other laughing.

“Oh, it’s a fact I can assure you; and old Goldfringe, who, you know, is a red-hot whig, and as stingy as Molière’s *Avare*, flew into a desperate rage, found out the whole affair, and swore he never would consent to his son

marrying a Tory, and that Tory without a shilling."

"Why, has she no fortune?"

"Only the brace of thousands which is the usual portion of our female aristocracy."

"Quite a case of Montagues and Capulets: and what did Harry?"

"Swore he would exchange into a black regiment."

"And old Goldfringe, what said he?"

"Why, he coolly replied, as the Abbé did, upon a certain occasion, to the Duke de Vendomme, '*Faites, faites toujours, Monseigneur.*' So Harry cooled upon this, and instead of joining the blacks, went to White's, and engaged himself to ride in a steeple-chase."

"If that does not kill him, he is lucky. But the Delphine, does she not reciprocate? Did she come the gentle Juliet, or do as his horse might have done—throw him over?"

"Why, he told me that he was forbidden, the house; so, I would back any odds that she has no objection to his being a glove, or affixing a ring, upon that hand."

"Ah, I know what women are," rejoined the other, "when they cannot marry *par amour*, they will do so *par dépit*."

“ But Goldfringe says he will run away with her to Gretna.”

“ Egad, he must run ; for he has not money enough to pay post-horses, or even fees—*point d'argent point de Suisse*. Besides, Delphine knows the world too well, and is too fond of its good things, to marry a man merely for the pleasure of darning his stockings, and feeding upon Cupid's pottage. No, no ! Gamblebill against the field ! It is just the thing to suit Eaglehurst and Lady Castlerose. Rank ; a *rara avis* in the shape of an unencumbered twenty thousand a year ; four or five as pretty rotten boroughs as ever merited disfranchisement ; a fat living or two for younger ducklings ; good honest, old Tory principles, handed down from Noodletop, first Baron, *temp.* King John, to Shatterbrain, present and fifth earl, who, in virtue of that most unaccountable privilege of the peerage, holds old Eaglehurst's proxy.”

“ But Shatterbrain, as you call him, is old enough to be her father ; and she is in love with Harry, and has, moreover, a will of her own.”

“ Old Goldfringe has a will to make, at all events,” retorted the other gentleman, “ and will, no doubt, omit Master Harry if he persists ; and, as for Gamblebill's age, that is all in her favour : she will be a widow the sooner.”

“That is a bad speculation; for the more one desires this kind of people to vacate their seats, the more they resist a dissolution.”

“True; for they say your uncle holds on like a sloth to a bough. I saw old Clip, the Jew money-lender, yesterday, and he told me, with a tear in his confounded usurious eye, that he fears he shall die before your post-obits are worked out.”

At this moment, the crowd, which stood near the piano, or were lounging around the ottoman in the centre of the room, either drew back their bodies or their legs, to make way for a brilliant, dark-eyed woman of commanding figure and great expression of countenance, who advanced, upon the arm of a man, whose features betrayed a greater fondness for money than music. I soon ascertained this lady to be the celebrated Catalani, and, for a while, forgot all other thoughts, in the delightful anticipation of hearing her splendid voice. After a few compliments from the countess and Lady Delphine, which the renowned stranger returned with no common grace and dignity, one of the musical gentlemen who attended her, seated himself at the piano, and, striking the chords, ran over a brilliant prelude, as a signal for silence. It was no easy task, however, to still the murmuring,

buzzing sounds, which, like the booming of the waves, or rustling of the forest leaves, were heard around ;—it was no easy matter to induce these would-be devotees of music to exchange the pleasure of hearing their own voices, for the gratification of listening to the unrivalled songstress. At length, after repeated commands and hints from Lady Castlerose, and supplicating looks from the knot of real amateurs, who were eagerly bending to catch the first intonations, the noise was hushed, and silence generally established, save when broken here and there by a giggle from behind a fan, or an audible whisper from beneath the shelter of an upraised hat.

The accompanier now looked in the face of the singer, bent to the instrument, and, in a moment more, the clear, thrilling, powerful notes of the Italian were heard swelling in majestic flights that made the windows vibrate, or fell into soft and silvery cadences that touched the inmost fibres of the heart.

At this moment, my feelings were so intense that my eyes were dimmed with tears, and, had I not feared observation, I should have wept outright. Whether my emotion was perceived by Lady Delphine, I cannot tell: she looked towards me once or twice; it is true, but with

an air of abstraction and vacancy. It was evident her thoughts were far away. I did not pass unnoticed, however, by the singer, for her dark and piercing glance fell more than once upon my features, as I gazed upon her with an expression of wonder and sensibility.

When the burst of applause that followed the last powerful exertion of her finale had subsided,—when she had received the homage due to her talents from the many noble and fashionable persons who crowded round to compliment her, she turned round, and addressed herself to me, with the easy, graceful freedom peculiar to her countrywomen, saying, “You appear fond of music, sir.”

“Passionately so,” replied I.

“I can distinguish in a moment,” said she, “between those who have a real, unassumed passion for the art, and those who only affect to admire it because it is the fashion, or because I am the fashion.”

“There can be no one, signora,” I rejoined, “who can be so dead to the magic influence of sound, as not to be moved by the exciting powers of such a voice as yours. It realises what we have heard of the Syrens: and if they really sang as you do, I would rather have risked the dangers that menaced Ulysses, than

have had recourse to his expedient to exclude a single note."

"What a fine compliment for an Englishman," answered she, bowing her head, and smiling, "they say your countrymen are not generally enthusiastic. Do you know that I am often more flattered when I see my efforts rewarded with a tear, than with the boisterous applause that is so often lavished upon me."

Lady Castlerose now beckoned, and, after presenting me to a man of very noble figure and mild expression of countenance, whose fine person was decorated with the star and knee-band of the garter, she said, "I hope, sir, my young friend, Mr. Penguin, will be induced to exhibit a specimen of those talents of which no one is so capable of judging as your royal highness."

I felt ill at ease when I discovered this to be one of the royal family. But the prince, who was himself a first-rate artist and connoisseur, made a very gracious and kind reply, and, among other questions, asked me under what masters I had studied.

"Under none, please your royal highness, except Nature and M. de Florennes," replied I.

The prince smiled at the association, and then said, "Come, let us hear what you can do ; I will stand by and assist you."

Never did I feel more terrified, not only at being thus addressed by one of the royal family, but at this proposition. I was, however, as much flattered as surprised at being thus noticed by a personage of his exalted rank, and had sufficient presence of mind to observe that his royal highness's conversation attracted the observation of many other persons, who now thought I must be "somebody;"—indeed, I heard the words "gentlemanly," "good-looking," "extraordinary history," "yes, that is he," "I should like to know him," and so forth, whispered in various directions.

Although I trembled from head to foot at the idea of exhibiting before such an audience, Lady Castlerose whispered in my ear, "You cannot refuse the duke's commands;" and then archly added, "it matters little how you play, for if his royal highness applauds, which will doubtless be the case, all the rest of the room will follow his example; and you will be the lion of the day."

I made no reply, but, with a face paler than that of a condemned criminal, and my whole frame shaking, I took forth my violin, stooped down to tune it and hide my trepidation, and then placed myself before the music-stand, upon which Lady Castlerose herself arranged my book. The prince stationed himself in a posi-

tion to turn the leaves, and the beautiful Italian drew near, and claimed silence. I looked up once, and saw my dear old friend gazing upon me with an air of paternal encouragement, and Lady Delphine leaning upon his arm, with an expression of equal interest. This lent me a little courage; so, heaving a deep, nervous sigh, I drew my bow across the instrument.

At first, my notes were weak, uncertain, inanimate. I felt this—I felt my own insufficiency, and had well nigh let fall my violin, for my arm and fingers seemed numbed and enervated. But, as I proceeded, the deep silence that reigned around, was broken by exclamations from the prince of “Bravo!” the sweet and moving voice of Catalani chimed in with “*Bene, bene!*” M. de Florennes also ejaculated “*Charmant!*” and Lady Delphine and her aunt both echoed “Delightful!” an example that was followed by many others, who had before paid no attention, and even now only applauded, as the countess had predicted, because they saw the example given by the prince. This warmed my heart, and braced my nerves; the life-blood returned to my fingers, my pulse beat more freely, and my arm was strengthened: I touched the strings with greater confidence and self-command, and, gradually

warming with my subject, and giving way to the enthusiasm with which music always inspired me, I forgot that I was standing at the elbow of a prince of the blood,—I thought no longer of my being an unknown stranger—but broke into a succession of rapid and brilliant passages, that elicited the most encouraging plaudit.”

My success was, in short, complete—far beyond my most sanguine expectations. Elated and emboldened by the applause of such an assembly, I ventured to introduce some variations upon an old French air: this set the seal to my triumph: I was within two bars of the finale, which was so familiar to me as not to require my looking at the book, when I lifted my eyes towards the spot where Lady Delphine and de Florennes had stood. They were gone, but an object presented itself, that in an instant overwhelmed my faculties. My bow and instrument fell powerless by my side, and had I not supported myself, or rather had not the gracious prince kindly supported me, I should have dropped to the ground. I was faint, sick, and almost deprived of my senses: some of the by-standers attributed my indisposition to the excitement of my performance: whilst others declared that, although they abhorred “the fiddle,” they had

never heard anything more beautiful or extraordinary of its kind. Galling as it may be to my vanity, or to that of others who are induced to make similar exhibitions of their talents, experience has since shown me that my success was less due to my own merits, than to the notice of the illustrious personage, and one or two others, whose verdict no one ventured to dispute. Herein is another proof of the truth of the worthy bishop's observations, to whom the reader was introduced at Farnham, and who might have paraphrased the well-known line, by saying, "*Infortunate puer ! Nimum ne crede cremonæ.*"

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CHAPTER XI.

The cause of my emotion is explained in a conversation with M. de Florennes—Figmat trenches upon treason, and his wife rebels—One of my colleagues gives me a very unsophisticated receipt for rendering myself desired, by making myself scarce—I am crossed in love, but console myself with a good dinner and reading a sermon.

THE object which had produced the sudden effect narrated in the last chapter, was nothing more or less than a female portrait—a portrait in which the lineaments of the face that had haunted me ever since the night of my dream, were depicted with the utmost fidelity. Yes, there she was such as she then appeared to me ; her hat and dress were nearly similar ; there was the scar upon her cheek, and the dark and unbending expression of her eye was most accu-

rately delineated. It was an expression of haughty melancholy, of commanding reserve, but with little of that moving sensibility and tenderness which make one of the greatest ornaments to the female visage. When I caught a sight of the portrait, its gaze was fixed upon me, at least I fancied so, and had the figure been animated with life I could not have felt greater emotion.

De Florennes, Lady Castlerose, and her niece, soon came to my aid. Lady Hydrogen also drew forth her richly enamelled vinaigrette, which was attached to her finger by a ring, and chain. Two or three other gentlemen and ladies also produced Eau de Cologne; and Catalani, enchanted at seeing me so much affected at my own music, startled, as she supposed I was, at the sounds myself had made, loudly declared she had never met with an English virtuoso half so interesting. I was not in a state of mind, however, to pay attention to what was passing around—all I desired, was to get out of the crowd, and return to the city. To ask who the original of the portrait was, or to betray the cause of my sudden nervousness, would have only subjected me to ridicule. It was evident, however, that she must be of the family, and this, I had the good sense to feel, was an additional reason for keeping my own

counsel, at all events until I could communicate with M. de Florennes. But I even feared to tell him, lest he should deride me for being disturbed by anything so trivial as the coincidence between the lady's face and the personage of my dream. At any rate, it was impossible that I could mention the subject to Lady Castlerose, or her niece, without offending them by insinuating that I dared to cherish an idea of the original being my mother.

This was a dilemma from which I was not likely to be relieved. Not knowing that it was a solecism in good-breeding, to say good-night, when quitting a party, I took leave of the countess and Lady Delphine as formally as if I had been ending a minuet; as I accompanied Count de Florennes down stairs, I received an invitation from Lady Hydrogen, to a very select party of "literati and artistes;" as well as three or four cards from other ladies to "a little music" at which they were extremely anxious I should appear; not only because I was Lady Castlerose's lion, but because they had ascertained that a cup of tea, an ice, and a glass or two of lemonade were all that I required as a remuneration for my performance. Indeed, when I afterwards came to know the enormous demands made by foreign artistes for the aid of their vocal or instrumental

services, I was not surprised at these ladies considering it a great God-send, to discover that they might entertain their guests so cheaply, and this with the still more extraordinary phenomenon of native talent.

I threw myself into the hired chariot, which had brought Count de Florennes, and proceeded with him towards his lodgings in Leicester-square. No sooner was I seated, than I said, "Can you tell me, sir, whose portrait that was near which you were standing whilst I was playing?"

"Certainly," said he, "it is that of Lady Eaglehurst."

The immensity of my folly now burst upon me more forcibly, and I remained silent, being ashamed to ask any further question. But the count continued—"I am not surprised at your noticing it; it is an admirable painting, and a most faithful likeness of what I should call a very faithless woman."

"Why faithless, sir?" demanded I.

"O," replied he, "there is a mystery about her that I am not exactly acquainted with: but you know she is Lord Eaglehurst's second wife."

"I do, sir, but I have heard her held up as a model of virtue, and have understood that she possessed every sterling quality but that of

kindness toward William and his sister. Perhaps," added I, making what I thought a skilful stroke of diplomacy, "perhaps she had children by her first marriage."

"Not that I ever heard of," answered he, "nor has the mystery of her first marriage been entirely cleared up. It is known, of course, to the family, but it is a subject to which I never ventured to allude. There were many reports in the world at the time. Lord Eaglehurst married her abroad; in Italy or Spain, I believe."

"In Spain, sir!" exclaimed I, starting, for in an instant my mind reverted both to the Italian of my dream, and to the old gipsey's prophecy about Spanish gold, "and have you any idea who she was?"

"Some people said she was the daughter of an Irishman implicated in the rebellion, who married a foreign nobleman, Italian or Spaniard, I know not which, and—but I will tell you in strict confidence, I did hear she laid herself out to captivate Lord Eaglehurst, who was then travelling, and that her husband disappeared in a mysterious manner."

"Good God, sir!" replied I, with a just feeling of indignation, "do you suppose that she was in any way accessory to her husband's death?"

“No,” rejoined the count, “I merely repeat the report as it was communicated to me at the period of Lord Eaglehurst’s marriage, which excited the greater surprise both in his own family, and in the world, from his well-known prejudices about rank and politics, and from his rigid notions of female duty. But, alas! when love once gains possession of our faculties, experience, reason, and principle, are but feeble barriers. I am bound to say that whoever she may have been, her conduct since her marriage with my worthy friend has been exemplary—and although her manners are not such as generally please, she is universally respected.”

“And feared, sir—at least by her step-children.”

“Perhaps this proceeds from her having none of her own,” retorted he; “we often find this to be the case when similar disappointments occur: and the more so since Lord Toryville’s constitution does not promise a long life, and with him the title merges. But,” continued the count, “I must now ask you why you express so much anxiety about Lady Eaglehurst? There is something in your earnest manner, and your agitation, which betrays a more than ordinary interest.”

I paused for a while to consider, and then

replied, "Sir, I can have no secrets from you ; therefore, although I may bring upon myself your rebuke and derision, I will tell you that I cannot divest myself of the most extraordinary presentiment that I am not entirely unconnected with Lady Eaglehurst."

"With Lady Eaglehurst !" returned the count. "Bah ! bah ! upon what are your suspicions founded ?"

"Upon a dream, sir : upon secret and inexplicable sympathies and coincidences, which, however, fill my mind with mingled confidence and confusion."

"I fear," replied De Florennes, "that you have permitted yourself to be carried away by superstitious and wild visions, that are opposed to common sense and even probability : but speak : you may rely upon my discretion and advice ; and if I see the slightest glimmering of reason in what you say, you may depend upon my assistance to unravel the mystery."

I then narrated the gipsey's prophecy, the details of my dream, and other circumstances, which he listened to with great attention. When I had terminated, he said,

"I must first condemn you for yielding to these superstitions, and for allowing yourself to be diverted from more substantial objects, by

this vain chimera. The cant words of the Bohemian ought not to have made any impression upon a sensible mind; and, as for your being moved by a dream, that is unworthy of any rational creature. The coincidence between the likeness of the face in the boat and the picture, is easily accounted for. You must have seen Lady Eaglehurst at Frogmore or elsewhere, without being aware of your mind receiving the impression at the moment. Thus her image was reproduced in your dream. This is of common occurrence, especially when the mind is impregnated with subjects connected with the person. Your dream is a wild one, but your waking thoughts, my young friend, are still more visionary. I will be still more frank with you. You are very young, very enthusiastic, and of a character more than ordinarily romantic. You were attached, even as a boy, to your friend's sister; an ideal love to which you have often alluded. The mine was prepared, the spark to ignite it was alone wanting—that spark came with the mere act of vision. But beware how you give way to a sentiment that may cause your ruin, and the loss of that protection which is so essential to your welfare. Had I not known your earlier sentiments, I should have discovered your pas-

sion for Lady Delphine the moment I saw you together. You are too young, too impetuous and artless, to be able to master the expression of your eyes. It grieves me to see this: for however much inclined Lady Castlerose and Lord Eaglehurst may be to befriend you—if they were to know that you raised your pretensions so high, you would be dismissed without further ceremony, I know the world, and I know them. Listen to the counsels of experience; think no more of her, or of your dreams.”

“Sir, it is more powerful than my reason, it haunts me night and day.”

“Then you are only fit for Bedlam. It is a deplorable aberration. Unless you would court your own ruin, banish both from your thoughts. I cannot expect, at your age, the strength of mind of riper years: but I do expect that you should have sense enough to avoid a precipice in broad daylight. You discarded my counsel at Thistle-house and brought on yourself the severest retribution: if you do not take heed to what I now say, a still more bitter penalty may be your lot. You will lose the only friends you have, and instead of insuring that gratitude and countenance which is now your right, you will forfeit all your prospects, and be treated—for-

give my plainness—with just contempt for your presumption.”

“Sir,” said I, “there is infinite reason in all you say; and although I may not be able to vanquish sentiments that have grown up with me for years, and that have increased within the last ten days, I solemnly promise you never to allow a word or even a look to escape me that can betray my feelings.”

“That is all I can demand at first,” replied he; “for I well know with what ardour we love at your age. I should recommend absence, if that were possible; but that cannot be, since it is essential to cultivate their society. Besides, from the interest you excited this evening, and from the notice taken of you by the prince, the door is opened to further progress. You must strike while the iron is hot, and lose no opportunity, consistent with your duty to Mr. Figmat, to elevate yourself in the world. Its denizens will endeavour to make use of you and your instrument—convert them into tools, and in lieu of occupying your mind with extravagant dreams, and an equally absurd passion, think only of your advancement, and who knows if before you are twenty-one, before you have attained a reasonable age for marriage, if some of your visions may not be realised?”

The carriage now reached the door of the Sablonière Hotel: here the count wished me good night, and promised to see me on his return from Hartwell. I continued my progress to Lothbury, and being admitted by Simon, I slunk with noiseless steps to my attic, and was not long ere the conflicting emotions that assailed my heart were calmed in sleep.

When I descended to breakfast upon the following morning, Sophia was already at her post, and, in despite of my admiration for the charming women I had seen at Lady Castle-rose's, I could not help contrasting the bright and clear lustre of her eye, the inimitable freshness of her whole appearance, with the faded, haggard, and unquiet countenances of many even of the youngest of those who were considered the most beautiful of the countess's circle; for never were health, tranquillity of soul, innocence, purity, and contentment, more strongly depicted than in the whole expression of the merchant's daughter.

I had scarcely time to reply to her first question ere Figmat and his wife entered, and I was called upon to give an account of the previous evening's entertainment. The former listened without coughing, and when I terminated, the latter ejaculated, "Upon my word, Mr. Pen-

guin, I should not be surprised to see your movements in the Post. But did his royal highness really hold the candle for you?"

"He graciously turned the leaves of my music-book."

"And were you not quite flustered? I should have been in a sad quandary. Why, I saw the lady mayoress tumble backwards over a chair at the Mansion-house as she retired, as in duty bound, with her face towards the Duke of York. However, it was worth while to tumble, for his royal highness condescendingly stooped and picked her up."

Here a cough like the snort of an angry camel was thrust in by Mr. Figmat, who said, "I never heard such trash. Why the devil should not a royal duke behave as civilly as any other of the king's subjects?"

"Subjects!" exclaimed Mrs. Figmat with a look of astonishment. "Why, Andrew, I vow and declare you speak downright treason. This comes——"

"Of your knowing no more of the constitution than the Koran. Yes, subjects," retorted he, "for the king's sons are no more than other peers. They are all equal in the law's eye, and if the lady mayoress chose to crawl out like a crab instead of turning and walking away like

an honest woman, her tumble served her right. I say the best thing the royal family can do, in return for the money we pay them, is to be civil and do the best they can to support the liberties of the people, without which support they might whistle for bed and board."

"Thank God, Mr. Figmat, no one heard you," rejoined his wife, rising, "and I won't sit to listen to such Despard-like language. It makes me shiver to think of your speaking in this manner. I hope Mr. Penguin will not repeat it."

"He may take a trumpet instead of a fiddle, and proclaim my sentiments at Temple-bar, for all I care," retorted the merchant; "Andrew Figmat pays taxes, tithes, rates, and the deuce knows what else, and when his country wants his money—there it is. But nothing shall prevent him speaking as he thinks."

"Lock up the sugar, my dear," said Mrs. Figmat to her daughter, as she moved towards the door. "Ah, Sophy, child, it will be our fate, I fear, to see your father put into the Tower for high-treason."

Figmat endeavoured to drown her words by his usual artifice, and by roaring out something about Hampden and Sidney, but she out-blustered him as the tempest outroars the seaman's voice.

“It is a hard thing upon us,” continued she, “who are loyal and good subjects, to be left out at the Mansion-house parties, and to be set down as wicked Whigs and revolutionists. But I have as good a right to go to court as any other person, and I will go, and present you, my darling.”

“Then you’ll be laughed at for your pains,” roared out the husband. “What the dickens have you to do at court? what do half the people, who get presented, do there? What good do they get, except paying a guinea to the marshalman for sticking their names in the paper, or showing their tawdry finery to their own cooks and housemaids?”

“Guinea or no guinea,” replied the wife, “it is time Sophy should be introduced to something better than bank-clerks and sucking aldermen, so I certainly will go to the next birth ——”

“You may go to the next burial, and be ——”

What word might have followed, or did follow, I cannot repeat, for Mrs. Figmat slammed the door at this moment with such force that it cut short my master’s speech, and apparently cooled his passion. For, after swallowing a cup of tea, he said, “A good creature after all, but as obstinate as a mule; but what can you expect

from a woman? Egad, I believe I must humour her, for Sophy's sake, and if Sophy does go to court she shall make some of their mouths water. There shall not be a richer dress or a prettier face inside the palace. Did you see anything that could hold a candle to her last night?"

"No, sir," replied I, "and such was the reflection I made when I came down this morning."

"Ay, ay; I know how it will be. If I were to show her among the needy spendthrifts at the West-end, I should have a pack of them at her heels in a moment. They would not care a bunch of dried grapes for her worth, or beauty, but they would give tongue like the Putney-hounds after a drag, if they scented out her plum—and a plum she shall have, some day or another. They'll lick their lips at that—but I won't let her marry a ruined lord if I can help it—they are all Tories—all sons of corruption, and would fling her good money after their bad, and then, when they had spent or bedevilled her fortune, would neglect her and laugh at me or my memory. Yes! I know the world, and, much as I love Sophy, and little as I wish to thwart her inclinations, I would cut her off with a shilling if she were to cast herself away

upon one of these rotten borough sparks ;” and so saying he bade me follow him into the counting-house.

Week after week now rolled on, without bringing any intelligence from Mr. Robsome, upon whom, however, I called more than once. My days were passed in strict devotion to the duties of the counting-house, where I soon acquired such habits of business, and ready knowledge of the divers branches of mercantile affairs, in which my master was engaged, that he entrusted me with his confidence, and, in less time than I could have expected, employed me in two or three commercial negotiations at Liverpool, and other places, where he had connexions and correspondents.

I did not, in the meantime, neglect my West-end friends, from whom I received several invitations, nor the instrument, through whose talismanic influence I gained access to their society. Orpheus’ lute was not of greater importance to him than my cremona to me. I had no Eurydice to recover, but I had more than one Proserpine to soften, and, in order to improve myself, I took occasional lessons from a celebrated master, and practised night and morning several hours ; which I was enabled to do without disturbing any one but the amorous

cats, who held their court of love in the gutter of my attic. I suppose I must have been endowed with powers somewhat similar to those of the divine Thracian, for scarcely a night passed that Figmat did not lay aside his Whig evening paper, and call for my fiddle. He was, moreover, marvellously pleased at my trying some old English ballads, and learning to sing them, whilst Sophia accompanied me upon the piano. This afforded him so much pleasure, that I became as necessary to his evening's amusement, as I was useful in his counting-house; so that, whenever I received an invitation to a party at the West-end, I perceived that it was no ways agreeable to him that I should accept it. He did not refuse or object; but the announcement always produced a cough, and thus the fear I had of offending him induced me often to renounce the proffered pleasure. I chanced to express my regret at this one day to one of my brother clerks; the same that had given me lessons in punctuality.

“Oh,” said he, “that just shows you know nothing of life. I’ll bit you up at the right hole. They want to make a cat’s-paw, of your catgut. That’s the time of day. Now, unless you wish to get as common as cowcumbers in September, (I thought of Windfall,) you ought to make

yourself as scarce as grass in February. I can chaunt a bit, and flatter my mother's son I have as pretty a turn out of songs as Braham or Dibdin—you shall hear me some night at our club; but I am up to twig. I only out with one or two, just to teaze their appetites, and, even then, I take as much squeezing as an unripe lemon. Do a bit of dark, Master Peregrine, I say, and refuse them here and there; it will only make the old girls more eager to light their candles at your lamp. I know what the West-end kiddies are; they have not got to book up for your fiddle—that makes them go so free. But they'll throw out a spavin some fine morning; and unless you look sharp, they'll gib and throw you over—that's life.

“I have no reason to think so,” replied I; “for it is impossible to have met with greater kindness and disinterestedness than I have from many of them. Besides, what can they get from a poor fellow like me? Surely a few scrapes of my bow is no great return for their politeness.”

“Well, if you think you can go without a bearing-rein, follow your own nose,” rejoined he; “only take care it does not get put out of joint. I know a crumb of what's what—and all

I say is, that if I worked on a West-end mail, I would'nt handle the ribbons every day, to please the post-master-general himself."

Joyous, beyond my most sanguine expectations, would my time have passed, had I not been tormented with that most painful of all moral anxieties—suspense. I was so contented in the bosom of the worthy merchant's family, so flattered at the kindness shown to me by Lady Castlerose, and many of her friends, that I dreaded, more than ever, the idea of being torn from these tranquil enjoyments, and being compelled to proceed to that distant country, which now inspired me with loathing.

My heart was, however, fearfully perplexed. For, on the one hand, it was impossible, notwithstanding all my efforts, to conquer that affection for Lady Delphine, which, had it been discovered by Lady Castlerose, would have excluded me from her house; and, on the other, I had strong grounds for believing that Sophia Figmat entertained sentiments towards me, which, had they been suspected by her parents, would, I feared, entail my dismissal from beneath their roof. This was, indeed, being placed between Scylla and Charybdis, and cost me a world of anxiety; the more so, since the latter did not entirely depend upon myself

Thus, when I was at Lady Castlerose's, or in company with Lady Delphine, I had an air of distraction and reserve, that more than once attracted their attention; and, whilst I was at home, I looked equally embarrassed from the dread of committing myself in any way that might excite the suspicion of Mr. and Mrs. Figmat, or give reason for Sophia to think that I was aware of her secret. My head being filled with a wild enthusiasm for Lady Delphine, there was no room for any other sentiment, and I was too single-minded, perhaps, too little hardened in the ways of the world, to play the contemptible part of a male coquet, a practice so common among men of all classes.

I was walking in Kensington Gardens with Lady Castlerose, upon a Sunday afternoon, when the former made several reflections, in answer to a gentleman who had been laughing at the sudden retirement from the world of one of its gayest female votaries. Not having bargained for so long a sermon, he took the opportunity, when we approached the gate, to escape, and mount his horse, to join, as he said, Lady Delphine, who was driving, with one of her friends, in the Park. He had no sooner left us, than her ladyship struck into an unfrequented path, fixed her eyes steadily upon me,

and, putting her hand upon my wrist, said, "Mr. Penguin, you must excuse me if, using the privilege of friendship and sincere regard for your welfare, I venture to give you a little serious advice."

"O!" replied I, "your ladyship cannot honour me more: be it what it may, I will gratefully obey."

"I hope you will," answered she; "for I have discovered your——"

I eagerly interrupted her with the word "Father!" thinking she was going to add, parents.

"No," retorted she, "your being in love."

If she had told me that I was a thief, I could not have looked more abashed or more guilty. I would have replied, but my tongue clove to my mouth, as if it had been glued with bird-lime.

"Yes; you are in love with Delphine. Your embarrassment and absorbed manner has struck me upon more than one occasion, and I have carefully watched you."

I hung down my head, twisted my glove, and appeared still more dumb-founded and foolish than ever.

"I am not afraid for my niece," added the countess, with a look of haughtiness which I had

never remarked in her before ; “she is fully alive to her situation, her birth, her expectations, and the immense space that separates her from you. Such a person as Lady Delphine Toryville would blush even at the idea of encouraging one so inferior to herself. Indeed, in this our sex is infinitely superior to yours ; for there is scarcely a man breathing who has sufficient loftiness of mind or command over his feelings, to distinguish between a duchess or a dairymaid ; —one hears every day of peers running away with cooks : but one rarely finds a peeress descending to a groom. You, at all events, have fallen into the noblest extreme. Monsieur de Florennes tells me you had formed this unlucky attachment even before you ever saw my niece.”

To deny the fact was useless ; so I stammered out something about folly and forgiveness, and she continued, “ Other persons, less acquainted with the world, would laugh at the idea of such nonsense, and would treat the matter as a boyish aberration.”

“ It is so,” answered I, taking desperate courage : “ it is the enthusiasm that one feels for a beautiful picture. I never was bold enough to aspire to anything but the honour of worshipping her as I would a divinity, and I hope this cannot offend you or her.”

“It does offend,” retorted she, gravely.

“Then I am most unfortunate, for my only ambition is to merit your protection and esteem: if I forfeit that, I lose all. I had hoped,” added I, “that no one would have discovered my sentiments.”

“You have not art enough to conceal them,” replied she, “nor can such self-command be expected in one so inexperienced: not only I, but Lord Gamblebill and others, have made the discovery;—indeed, I have been told you had so little control over your feelings, that your emotion at my concert, some weeks past, was the result of jealousy.”

“Your ladyship wrongs me,” replied I; and then, forgetting the prudential motives that ought to have restrained me, I added, “my emotion was not caused by jealousy, but by the sudden sight of a picture.”

“A picture!” retorted she: “what picture? This appears very improbable.”

“It is not the less true, I assure you,” replied I, somewhat stung at the manner she assumed towards me. “Your ladyship recollects my dream?”

She changed colour at this, bit her lip in a frowning manner, and said, “Well, proceed.”

“The portrait of Lady Eaglehurst,” answered

I, "is that of the lady I saw in my dream: it was that singular coincidence which affected me so deeply."

"Are you aware, sir," replied she, in a voice that showed she was extremely displeased; "are you aware of the impropriety and indelicacy of what you are saying?—this is indeed carrying matters a little too far. Have you ever mentioned the subject to any other person?"

"To none but the count," said I; conscious, though too late, of the fault I had committed.

"Well, then, if you do not wish to forfeit the support of our house," replied she, "take heed for the future, to put a guard upon your tongue. Bound by ties of gratitude to requite the services you have rendered our family, I shall lose no opportunity of serving you; but your visits must, henceforth, be less frequent in Bruton-street;—you will come when you are invited, and will be received as usual. Those invitations will cease if ever you recur to anything so preposterous as your allusion to that picture, or presume to hint, either by word or look, to your nonsensical romance about Lady Delphine: the very idea, sir, is insulting to us all. Despatches were received this morning at the Foreign Office from my brother: Lady Eaglehurst's health prevents her remaining longer in

the East Indies, and I expect her and Lord Toryville home in the course of a few weeks. You will see the necessity, therefore, of being upon your guard; and I will further tell you that, as I depend upon Lord Gamblebill's as well as Lord Voteburn's assistance, to procure you a place under government, if you offend the former by any further betrayal of your feelings for Delphine, you will lose a powerful friend, and thus cut the grass from under your own feet: perhaps you are not aware of Lord Gamblebill's position in regard to my niece."

A party of gentlemen and ladies now approached, and I withdrew, and hastened back towards the city. As I was crossing the corner of Hyde Park, at the top of Rotten-row, I met Lady Castlerose's carriage, and saw the beautiful profile of her niece, as she conversed with one or two gentlemen who rode by her side. I would have given a finger from my hand to have even looked at her, and envied the two cavaliers with a bitter envy. But I turned my head, and buried myself amongst the crowd, fearful lest Lord Gamblebill, or some other person, should observe me. The blight that fell upon my young heart at that moment, no one can imagine, nor I attempt to describe. For the first time, I began to reflect seriously upon my

dependent position ; and my bitterness of soul increased when I called to mind the haughty manner in which Lady Castlerose had pointed out my nothingness. The truth of De Florennes' and Figmat's observations now recurred to my mind. The veil was drawn aside, and proved to me that the favours of those who, during the intoxication of the last three months, had, I flattered myself, treated me as friends, were nothing more than acts of sufferance and of condescension to a pitiful inferior.

CHAPTER XII.

Showing the way in which I imitated peeping Tom of Coventry—My butterfly proceedings are acknowledged, but accompanied with some very good advice to the fair sex—M. de Florennes' opinions upon diplomacy—A strange proposition, something like mustard after dinner, from Mr. Robsome, and a tart reply from me—A light promises to shine upon the mystery of my existence.

It chanced one morning early, that I happened to have occasion for some music; so I glided down from my attic, and, as I passed the back door of Sophia's room, of which her mother kept the key, probably upon the principle of "fast bind, fast find,"—I heard voices within. Forgetting the old adage that listeners never hear any good of themselves, I paused, and, shame

be upon me, put my eye to the key-hole. There I saw the beautiful back of the fair girl, as she stood before the glass, combing out the long and luxuriant tresses, that fell in rich masses upon shoulders of the rarest symmetry—waving as the glossy sea-weeds rock upon the heaving surge. Her arms were raised in graceful curves, their natural roundness increased by the undulating motion of her person, whose admirable proportions appeared to greater advantage from being unencumbered with any artificial aid, beyond a thin morning wrapper: one unstockinged foot, small, tapering, high-instepped and white as the swan's-down at mid-day, was protruded a little forward: the other being concealed beneath her robe. Her head was slightly reclined over her left shoulder: a smile, bright as Aurora's purest ray, flickered upon her dimpled cheek, and displayed her matchless teeth: whilst her dark sparkling eye was raised towards the mirror, in which nearly the whole of her person was reflected with treacherous fidelity. It was a study for Titian, and rivalled in beauty one of the finest productions of that great artist's pencil; nay, it surpassed that picture in purity and delicacy. For the divine Venetian has left little to imagination in the portrait of his mistress, whilst here, nothing was

revealed but the exquisite graces of Sophia's fine contour, shaded by flowing draperies.

I stood transfixed, gasping, spell-bound—I was not long permitted to revel undisturbed: the sylph who watched over the mysteries of her toilet soon interposed, not in the aerial form of those who sought to rescue Belinda's tresses from the baron's "shears;" but in the substantial shape of one Jessy Groves, who occupied the enviable post of abigail to the merchant's daughter, and, as it appeared, enjoyed more of Sophia's confidence, or at least permitted herself greater liberties with her lovely mistress, than was at all accordant with their relative positions.

"The most perfect beauties often have moles," and such was the case with Sophia; but this was her only blemish—for she was so good, so pure, that the very shape and countenance of her moral virtues were almost as visible as the charms of her person; so, that they nearly attained that excellence that Plato says, "ought to excite in us a wonderful love for goodness."

"Lawd, miss!" said Jessy, as she collected her young mistress's long dishevelled hair in her hands, and applied the comb to it, "I thinks, as I said before, that Mr. Penguin's a very nice young man."

“Dear me, Groves, you run the teeth into my head!” exclaimed Sophia, giving a start.

“Ah miss,” retorted the abigail, “and a beautiful set he has surely—I means no impropriety, miss, but, as sure as London cream’s thickened with snails and chalk, there’s other things which runs in your head.”

“I wish you would mind your own business; do not tie the knot so tight,” said Sophia.

“The day’s not far off, miss, when I hope to see the indissolvable knot tied,” replied Groves, quietly twisting the circle of hair and fixing it with a comb; “I am so fond of weddings, they are so very awful.”

“Do not talk such stuff, Jessy.”

“Lawk, miss, I’m sure I does not pretend nothing unconsistory like.”

“Give me out a silk gown, Jessy,” said Sophia, interrupting her.

“Which, miss, the black? you’d better wear it; it becomes you best of any. I heard a gentleman say to your ma, ‘Madam,’ said he, ‘how handsome miss Sophy looks in black! just like Mrs. Siddons in the Mourning Bride—only a sight younger, and beautifuller.’”

“Who was that? not that I care,” replied Sophia, with a somewhat anxious look.

“If you don’t care to hear, it arn’t no use

for me to tell—will you wear the green-eyed jealousy-silk, miss?"

"No, Jessy, the black; but who was it? I may as well know."

"Who, miss? why, Mr. Penguin."

Sophia blushed deeply, and her maid said, "Lawk, miss, have you pricked yourself with a pin, the blood riz quite to your ears—do you know, miss, it makes my heart quite all come overish, when I see him moping and fiddling in a corner, and singing about love and constancy, and them kind of agrewating things; and thinks to myself, I knows why."

"And what do you think is the matter with him, Jessy?—give me my stockings."

"Matter, miss! why the same complaint as sends many a poor hinnocent creature to an early grave: as sure as chickens comes from eggs, he is in love."

"And who do you suppose he is in love with, Jessy, Lady Delphine Toryville, or somebody he has met at the other end?"

"Lawk, miss?" replied Groves, with a cunning laugh, "you are more of a conjuror than to think that."

"Indeed!" replied Sophia, "I have no idea—how should I? He rarely ever speaks to me, and when he does, he always seems as reserved and formal as if he did not like me."

“All a bow-stratyjim, miss,” retorted Groves. “Bless you, if you was not as hinnocent as the babe unborn, you’d see what is going on in his poor heart, which is quite like love lies bleeding—and only wants a smile or comfortable word from somebody, which shall be nameless, to become like a pride of the morning. I dursn’t speak my mind, but I’ve read a many novels and plays, and know right well what courting is: and if poor Mr. Penguin goes on simmering away o’ this fashion, I shouldn’t at all be surprised if he was to drop off some morning, like the lily of the valley, which is cropped by the tempestyous hand of the midnight trespasser.”

“Poor fellow!” said Sophia, with a sigh, “that would be a sad pity—he is very handsome, as you say.”

“Yes, miss, you may take your bible oath of that; and what’s more, handsome is what handsome does, as the holy scriptures says.”

“What do you mean, Jessy?”

“O, nothing, miss, only poor servants cannot expect to have their missess’s confidence as they would common parquisites, and so their missesses can’t expect to reciprocate in theirs. And sure as rabbits is smothered with onions, miss, I knows my place too well to pry into any of your confidential secretions. You’ve forgot

your garters, miss. Did I show you the beautiful ribbon he gave me? It is quite astonishing how he does fiddle."

"He plays delightfully, and is certainly a very agreeable person, and I do confess I am grieved to see him look so melancholy."

"Excuse me, miss," retorted Groves, as she encircled her mistress's tapering waist with her sash, "but you might cosmogrify his weepings and nashings of teeth into quite a general illumination, if you liked."

"You are very ridiculous, Jessy."

"Yes, miss, everything is always very ridiculous that we poor servants does—but many a fine lord would lose his way in the supernumerary meanderings of the forest if he did not stoop to be put in the right road by the humble navigator. If I were somebody, I wouldn't sigh and die for them as leaves his unrequited affections to languish like daffadils and pioneys for want of water, when there's a plenty that wouldn't inject his redresses."

"Well," replied Sophia, giving the last finish to her toilet, "since you must know the truth, Jessy, I would not reject them. But remember, if ever you say a word to any one breathing I will never forgive you. I would not have him know that I do not dislike him for all the world."

“ Lawd, miss,” answered Groves, “ I doesn’t purtend to no sientifics about phisiomony and the prespirations of the heart ! but if it be true that you don’t dislike him, i’fekins he won’t be long before his amatory intellect penetrates the Mysteries of Udolpho, and as sure as they cries sprats under the window, the torch of Hymen will spread his light wings, and a right merry wedding we’ll have.”

Sophia, who could not help laughing at her maid’s oratory, now quitted the room. I crawled back to mine, dressed myself, and having thus obtained a positive knowledge of the state of the garrison, determined to seize the earliest opportunity of opening the first parallel.

Neither the gaudy peacock, as with outspread plumage it flaunting woos the golden radiance of the sun ; nor Masaniello borne in short-lived triumph to the ducal palace, nor the successful, but no less ephemeral popular candidate at a county election, was ever more proud or elated than I at the discovery, that it only depended upon my own advances to revive Cæsar’s admirable model of laconic despatches. By one of those transitions that are totally opposed to the principles laid down by romantic authors, who always endow their heroes with a force of constancy that continues stedfast amidst the sever-

est shocks and cruellest torments, I contrived to transfer my affections from Lady Delphine to Sophia with nearly as much facility as my master would have made a transfer of stock.

I henceforth lost no opportunity of rendering myself agreeable in Sophia's eyes, and found, ere long, that I was rapidly falling into those meshes, in which I wished to envelope her, nor was I the first instance of a fowler being caught in his own toils.

The pre-occupations of the heart are said to distract men from given pursuits. This was not the case with me, for in proportion as my love for Sophia increased, so did my anxiety to please her father augment. Having above stairs all that I coveted, I laboured down stairs with redoubled zeal, and this so assiduously, that my master, who calculated my exertions upon the principle of steam, told me he should discharge at least one of my colleagues, for that I worked with a forty-clerk power. Having no wish to lose a moment of Sophia's society, with whom I was permitted to read, play, and talk, and this, now and then, alone, my time passed so contentedly that I declined several invitations. I went, however, once or twice to Lady Castle-rose's, and was received with the same open, unaffected kindness by Lady Delphine; nay, I

was even rebuked by her for my absence. I saw the picture again, and examined it minutely; but I took care neither to allude to or to be discovered gazing upon one or the other. I went further, for when Lady Castlerose told me she had received a promise that I should be appointed to the first vacancy as *attaché* to a foreign mission, I begged time to consider and communicate with Figmat and Count de Florennes, to the latter of whom I wrote forthwith. His reply was as follows.

“ You are bound to remember, however seductive the offer, that you cannot succeed in diplomacy without powerful and unabating interest. You may be appointed an *attaché*, but there, perhaps, you may languish half your life without chance of advancement. No matter how great your abilities, intelligence or activity, unless you can command a court or parliamentary influence you must expect to see your inferiors, in every moral point of view, promoted over your head. Any strictures from me, as a foreigner, may appear invidious; but the system pursued in the formation of your diplomatic corps is so vicious, that it is no matter of surprise to find England constantly outwitted, and only carried safely through by her immense passive power, and *vis inertiae*. I have held

situations, where I have been enabled to make comparisons and draw unprejudiced conclusions, and I may venture to say, that, for the most part, your young diplomatists, though sometimes tolerable classics, and generally good judges of horses, are inferior to those of other countries in knowledge of history, international law, local statistics, general combinations, national resources, prejudices, and a multitude of other acquirements, which are essential in their career. They perform their duties mechanically, and often with an ill-grace, and are careless about improving themselves, because they know they can rely upon extraneous aid. Patronage and family alliances too often stand them in lieu of application; for, however much you English may boast of your independence, there is no country in Europe where the minister is more enslaved by influences, which render it difficult for him to recompense those who are the most deserving, even if that be his desire.* Consequently, there is no country where a young man, without a certainty of continued support,

* If a minister were deaf to the solicitations of relations and friends, and also only raised men of pre-eminent merit to the first places—this just minister would pass in the world as useless, heartless, and perhaps

should be more cautious in selecting the career which has been proposed to you."

Figmat's opinions were less refined, but more positive. He told me that I should be a great fool to quit the bone for the shadow, and that a bird in the hand was worth a whole flock in a bush; and that, from what he had seen of my abilities and habits of business, he would venture to assert that if I stuck to the shop, I should be in the road to make an easy independence before I could even arrive at being a paid *attaché*. "Besides," said he, "the Tories cannot live for ever; and if you sail in their boat, you must expect to share the fate of the cargo. There will then be a scramble for places amongst the Whigs; and, as they've been kept out of clover so long, it is natural to suppose that they will take care and provide for their own friends. The best thing you can do, therefore, is to remain where you are, and, unless the fellow who holds your consignment forces you to go to India, the day may come when you may snap your fingers in the faces of both Whigs and Tories, and tell them you don't care a rush for their places or patronage."

dishonest. To the shame of the age be it said, that men in high office rarely owe their reputation of being good friends, relations, benevolent and virtuous, but to acts of injustice. *Helvetius de l'Esprit*, vol. i. cap. v.

A look from Sophia, which spoke more eloquently than her father's or M. de Florennes' words, and a grunt of approbation from Mrs. Figmat, sufficed to fix my resolution; and I therefore called upon Lady Castlerose, and respectfully declined her offer, saying I had henceforth resolved to devote myself to a mercantile career. Her ladyship made no great effort to deter me, and we parted, not without my observing that her countenance betrayed sentiments of mingled satisfaction at being relieved from providing for me, and contempt at the ignoble selection I had made.

It was about this time that Mr. Rightford informed me that the assizes had taken place, and that the burglar had been condemned to the capital punishment, but had been reprieved, and transported for life; — he had, however, persisted in concealing the names of his associates. “But,” added the worthy clergyman, “the police are upon the look-out for the murderers of the unfortunate Amersham barmaid, whose companion went immediately upon foreign service, where his profligate career was terminated by an honourable death. The deposition you have made has, however, opened a clue to their discovery, and it is hoped, unless they have escaped from the country, that they will fall, ere long, into the hands of justice.”

Nearly ten months had elapsed since my first admission into Figmat's house. Every day saw me increase in favour with my master and mistress, and, what was no less important, elevated me still higher in the good graces of Sophia: this she betrayed in more than one way, though not by words. But, although both of us kept the strictest guard over our tongues, there soon was established between us that kind of conventional understanding which is the ordinary result of mutual sympathy. It was contrary to the delicacy of her sex, and repugnant to her own pure nature, to let fall the slightest expression that could embolden me to speak, and I most cautiously avoided uttering a syllable upon the subject; for I was well aware, from her general sentiments and the love she bore her parents, that, although she might conceal her own feelings, she would not withhold an avowal of this nature from them, and I dared not hope, however much they might regard me, that they would give their assent, or permit their daughter to enter into any engagement. Parents, who ought to be the first to detect the workings of their children's minds, are unfortunately often the last to arrive at this discovery. It seems as if Cupid, whilst he sharpens the wits of lovers, unclasped the bandage from his own

eyes, and cast it over those of parents: such was the case in this instance; for Figmat, with all his pretended knowledge of human nature, not only told me that he thought by Sophy's manner that I was no great favourite of hers, but his wife, who declared that she knew every turn and twist of her daughter's mind, as well as her wedding-ring, said that she "thought Sophy would never marry, for she snubbed all the men as if they were Gogs and Magogs: but that perhaps her time was not yet come."

Two months more had nearly rolled away, when a note was brought me from Mr. Robsome, requesting that I would call upon him without loss of time. So soon as I was admitted into his sanctum, he bade me sit down, and thus addressed me:—"I have received a communication from the parties interested in providing for you. I regret to say that they have transmitted the most positive injunctions for your proceeding, without loss of time, to India."

"Never, sir," replied I, firmly.

"I must beg not to be interrupted," retorted he; "and please to remember that I am merely the agent in this business, and that I have no other motive for giving my opinion, than to fulfil my duty to my client and to you. Permit

me to observe, also, that you will do well not to make any rash resolves. My instructions are to see you fitted out in a liberal manner, and despatched by the first fleet to the presidency, where you will find Lord Eaglehurst, whose patronage is secured for you. You will doubtless soon be placed in a situation to amass a handsome fortune ; and, in the meantime, a sufficient allowance will be made to support you in respectability. It is a position which thousands would jump at : it is the high-road to wealth and influence. At the same time, I am bound to state, in the most peremptory manner, that your refusal will cause the utmost dissatisfaction to those who have the will and the power to befriend you, and that you will be abandoned to your own resources, or, what is nearly tantamount, to a hundred a-year for the remainder of your life."

"My mind, sir, is made up," I replied, after a short pause.

"I am glad of it," retorted he ; "therefore, the sooner you commence making preparations for your voyage, the better."

"You mistake, sir," answered I : "nothing but force shall compel me to go to India."

"Are you serious ?" demanded he, rising angrily from his chair.

“ Yes, sir, irrevocably so. I can provide for myself, and am bound by no ties to your employers. Surely, sir,” added I, “ those who cruelly neglected me during my infancy, who disowned me when a boy, who left me to shift for myself as I grew up, who refuse to communicate a word respecting my parentage, and who now wish to get rid of me by sending me across the seas—surely they have no claim upon my obedience: I have a prospect of gaining an independent livelihood without their assistance, and, for this, I am beholden to Mr. Rightford and Mr. Figmat, and not to them.”

“ You misjudge them, young man, and will, sooner or later, repent your headstrong conduct.”

“ That may be, sir; but, whoever they are, they must be very hard-hearted people; and, although I do not pretend to know anything of law, it seems to me that they can have no power over me, nor will I obey them. In short, it is my intention to remain with Mr. Figmat, who has behaved to me like a father, and promised me eighty pounds a-year: this is more than sufficient for my wants. Therefore, although I may be abandoned, you see, sir, I have the means of gaining an honourable existence.”

“Is this to be my reply? Pause well, I beg, before you decide—I will give you a week to consider.”

“My mind is made up, sir,” answered I; “nothing can induce me to change.”

“Humph!” rejoined he. Then, after walking about a few seconds, he proceeded: “I will make known your determination; and, since you reject the proposed offer, and are resolved to act in opposition to my advice, it would be useless to waste any further time in discussion.”

“Quite so,” rejoined I, with a dogged and resolute air, which seemed to surprise the old gentleman, who stared at me through his spectacles as if I had been some newly-discovered animal.

“Well, well,” said he, “I have done my duty: and if you think proper to act in defiance of my opinions and the injunctions of your friends——”

“Friends, sir,” replied I, “do not call them by so kind a name. I have no friends on earth, but the worthy merchant and M. de Florennes.”

“As you like, young man, as you like; you seem to have a very determined spirit—you must go your own way—but my time is precious. You will be pleased to give me a receipt

for this one hundred pound note, which I am instructed to pay you: and then, with your permission, we will put an end to the subject."

I did as he bade me, took my leave, and hastened back to the city, elated at the resolution I had shown, and with my mind infinitely more at ease than it had been for many months. I now knew the worst, and felt assured that I might henceforth devote myself to the sole object I had in view.

"Upon reaching Lothbury, I communicated the purport of the morning's conversation to the merchant's family, and was rejoiced to find that it met their approbation. Figmat, who, notwithstanding the excellence of his own heart, seemed not to have the best opinion of human nature, declared he was glad I had shown such spirit, and that he entertained little doubt that it was a scheme of my guardians to rob and get rid of me.

"A common occurrence," said he. "Indeed, I have known such things to occur, with people who hold up their heads as high as the monument, and pass for very honest men in the world. However, we will say no more on the matter; there is my hand: and since you

have chosen to follow my advice, and stick to the shop, I hope the shop will not be ungrateful."

Mrs. Figmat made some very kind, maternal observations about me, and some very unkind remarks upon the wickedness of those parents, or guardians, who behaved like tyrants to poor neglected children: and that I was quite right for preferring half a loaf in good old England, to a whole batch of bread amongst alligators, elephants, and nabobs, in India. Sophia listened with deep and silent attention; but I saw, by the expression of her countenance, that I had lost nothing in her estimation, by my resolution. Of this, I had further proof, shortly after.

It was my master's custom to celebrate the birthdays of his family in the good old English manner. Alas! I had no birthday record. I presumed that my age was about twenty; it might have been something more or less: but Mr. Robsome either could or would not give me any information upon the subject.

"To-morrow is the anniversary of your coming to this house," said the kind-hearted old citizen, "and, as you have no parish register to refer to, I should recommend your keeping the day you arrived here as that of your birth: and

why the devil shouldn't you? it has been a new life to you, my boy: and it will be your own fault, if it be not a happy and an honest one."

It was therefore settled as he proposed, and, the next day, set down as a holiday. When I came down to breakfast, in the morning, Sophia offered me her congratulations, and, taking forth a small brooch, which she said she had bought by her mother's approbation, presented it to me. I received it with all the gratitude such a gift merited, and, not being able to constrain my feelings, took her hand, pressed it to my lips, and held it for a moment between mine. As she made no effort to withdraw it, God knows how far I might have broken through my resolution, of avoiding all allusion to the state of my affections, had I not been interrupted by Simon, who presented me a note, which he said had just been left. On the outside was written, "Immediate;" so I asked Sophia's permission, tore open the wafer, and read as follows:—

"If you are desirous to know your real name, and that of your family, you may receive most important information, if you will come *alone* to the city corner of London Bridge, this evening punctually at six o'clock. If you decline, you may for ever lose the occasion of recovering your

rights. The writer of this, who is possessed of your secret, will be in readiness at the appointed hour."

I read and re-read this communication, which was written in a fair hand, and determined not to go. Upon due consideration, however, I thought it best to consult Mr. Figmat. After examining the paper, and taking three or four turns up and down the room, he said, "There can be no harm in your accepting the invitation. It would, indeed, be imprudent to throw away a chance of this kind. Providence often brings misdeeds to light, in a most mysterious and unexpected manner: and I should not be surprised if you returned with evidence that may put you upon the right scent. Go, therefore; but mind you take neither watch, money, nor anything but a good cudgel, and, as you are an active fellow, if any harm is intended, lay about you, and holloa for the watch; though, for the matter of watching, the city police is so confounded bad, that the whole common council might be robbed and murdered, and they none the wiser: and, perhaps, London little the worse."

It was with a strange mixture of melancholy and joyous forebodings, that I anxiously awaited the close of day. At length, the hour ap-

proached, and, having armed myself with a heavy stick, in which there was a spring dagger, I slipped out of the house, leaving Mr. Figmat to account for my absence.

CHAPTER XIII.

In which my fortitude is put to the test, and I stand in need of the prayers appointed for those “travelling by land and by water.”

So desirous was I not to be too late, that I reached the end of London bridge, at least half an hour before the appointed time, and placing myself near one of the lamps, so that I might be the more conspicuous, anxiously awaited the arrival of my mysterious correspondent. Already the neighbouring churches had tolled six; already the bells of the many vessels moored below bridge had struck the appointed hour, and I had been accosted by no one. Nearly twenty minutes more elapsed, and, no person approaching, I began to blame my folly, in giving credit to a hoax, and was preparing to return as fast as I could, to Lothbury, an intention backed by the wind and rain, which blew in heavy gusts

from the river, when I observed a female pass two or three times, look at me, pause, walk on, return, pause again, and, at last, coming up, she said, "Is your name Penguin?"

"It is," rejoined I, endeavouring to obtain a sight of the face, which was closely veiled.

"You received a note."

"I did."

"The person who wrote it has sent me to conduct you to him. Will you accompany me?"

"Where to?" replied I.

"Not far: across the bridge, and a little way down on the other side. We shall be there in ten minutes," rejoined she.

There was something in the voice of the female, which I fancied I had heard before; so I said, "It strikes me that you and I are not total strangers: where did we meet?"

"You will discover that presently," answered she: "but the rain falls heavy, and we shall be wet; besides, the gentleman is waiting."

"Who is he?" demanded I: "surely, there can be no harm in telling that."

"There is harm, though; for he bade me not—you will see in good time. Why, you are not afraid, are you?"

"Afraid!" replied I, "no; but why not

show your face, and tell me the name of the person who sent you."

"Because I don't choose to offend him to please you. But let us move on, I cannot wait any longer answering your questions: and," added she, in a flippant tone, "if you have not courage to go where a pretty girl leads—then you may find out your father and mother your own way."

"What! do you know my motives for coming here?"

"Certainly," replied she, "the gentleman has no secret from me."

"Are you his wife?"

"That's not your business," answered she—"so if you have a mind to come, let us be gone."

Being determined to proceed in the adventure, let what would happen, I offered her my arm; though both her expressions and manners convinced me that she was not of the most correct or well-educated class. Having crossed the bridge, we threaded our way in silence along the narrow streets and alleys of the Borough, until at length, after more than half an hour's walk, we came to a row of new buildings, near the river, few of which were as yet inhabited or lighted. It was a dark and

lonely spot, well adapted for deeds of violence ; but, as the writer of the note must have known that I was not likely to possess money or valuables, I acquitted him of any sinister intentions. I observed, however, to my companion, that “ her friend had selected a strange place for his residence ; but, as I was pretty quick at finding my way, and had well observed all the turnings, I should be enabled to retrace my steps without assistance.” At the same time, I could not suppress a vague apprehension of impending danger. This feeling was not diminished, when, upon turning round a corner, she stopped opposite a narrow door, and rapped in a peculiar manner with a stone or key.

After a moment's pause, the door opened, apparently by one of those spring contrivances used in France. My guide now took my hand, and drawing me after her, the entrance closed, and we were in perfect darkness. I confess that my pulse beat with unwonted quickness, and that I felt every inclination to return. But it was too late to repent, so I resolved to await the issue with firmness. After traversing a narrow passage, we came to the foot of some stairs : these we ascended, and, upon reaching the landing-place, I perceived a glimmering of light, issuing from a crevice, and heard voices.

My companion again rapped—a bolt was withdrawn, and we entered.

“ There,” exclaimed she—“ there’s your bird;”—then giving a sudden spring at my stick, she snatched it from me and threw it aside. The rapid transition from darkness to light dazzled me at first; but, ere many moments, I saw before me seven or eight men, seated at a table. The reader may judge of my dismay and surprise when I discovered, at the head of them, the landlord of the Pear Tree, the treacherous Sally’s father. Amongst his companions, I also recognised several of the faces I had seen from the loft of the little ale-house. It was, in fact, Sally herself who, I now found, had been employed to guide me; for she advanced to the table, which was strewn with bottles and glasses, lifted up her veil, filled a glass of spirits, tossed it off, and, bursting into a malicious laugh, said, “ Well, my boy ! I think I’ve paid you off for your split at old Rightford’s.”

Retreat or resistance were now equally impossible. Therefore, I determined to bear myself with as much courage as possible, though I had no doubt as to the purpose of the ruffians. Little time was accorded to me for reflection; for the landlord, fixing his scowling eye upon

me, said, "I take it, young chap, you know why we've trapped you here?"

"I know how, but not why," replied I, "unless it be to revenge yourself for my having prevented your robbing Mr. Rightford."

"You've hit it partly," responded he; "but that's not all."

"Top him at once," exclaimed another voice, "that's the shortest way."

"Not so fast, Dick," retorted the landlord; "there's the deposition he made down at the parson's. Martin's attorney says, that's enough to floor him, without other evidence."

"What! is the sneaking flat clouted for the murder?" said a third, in whom I recognised the same individual who menaced Martin at the Pear Tree.

"Yes," rejoined Sally's father; "they grabbed him the night before last."

"And Silver Bill, and Black Ned?"

"O they are safe across the water, and the Schoolmaster would never have queered himself, if he'd have staid among the Yankees. But he must needs come over when he heard of the officer's death; though he was told he'd get nabbed as soon as the traps got wind of him. There's three hundred pound blood-money on conviction."

“ Well, then, how is he to get out of the mess?” inquired a fourth.

“ Why, by alibi, to be sure,” answered the landlord.

“ That’s the time of day, we’ll swear anything,” exclaimed several voices.

“ As for swearing,” rejoined the landlord, “ that’s easy enough. But it arn’t so easy to make the twelve believe us. Besides, there’s not one of us but what’s wanted.” Then after a pause he continued, “ But this here chap, and be d—— to him, was up in my loft, you know, and seed the whole of us, the night of Sam’s misfortune; and so he must swear that Martin was amongst us, from first to last, and, as it’s all a matter of time, that will save him.”

“ And how is he to set to work?” demanded one of the others.

“ Martin’s attorney will be here presently, and he will settle the business,” rejoined Sally’s father. “ So, young un,” added he, addressing me, “ are you ready to swear as we tells you? If you don’t, you sha’n’t leave this place alive.”

“ I will not perjure myself to save the life of the villain who committed the foul deed,” replied I, looking steadily at the speaker.

“ Then you’li do so, perhaps, to save your own,” retorted he.

“ Not even then,” answered I, hoping to impose upon them by my firmness.

“ You won’t, won’t you ?” exclaimed three or four of the gang, who rose, threw themselves upon me, and, in despite of my violent struggles, pinioned my arms, tied them behind my back, and pinned me against the wall.

“ Into the hole with him,” roared out one of the fellows,” striking me, at the same time, on the breast : “ d—— him, he got my brother cast for death, and I’ll have his blood for it.”

“ Gently, Jem,” said the landlord, beating the table with his hand. “ My score against him is as long as yours ; but, before we clears that, we must have the alibi. If we puts him out of the way, the Schoolmaster will dance at the sheriff’s ball, and we shall lose the fivehundred pounds he promised us for helping him off.”

“ D——n the money, and d——n the snivelling Schoolmaster,” retorted the other ; “ I’ll have my vengeance.”

“ You sha’n’t touch a hair of his head,” rejoined the landlord, “ unless he refuses to come forward. So hearkee, Master Penguin : you’d better think twice of the matter. I’ve only to say, ‘ Go it, Jem,’ and there’d be an end of your peaching.”

Notwithstanding the interference of the land-

lord, who appeared to be the leader of the gang, the wretch who had maltreated me before, again laid his hands upon my throat and squeezed me with such violence that the blood almost gushed from my eyes. Upon this, Sally's father sprang forward, hurled the fellow from me, and placing himself between us, exclaimed, "If you go that rig again, Jem, I'll pitch you into the hole myself. We won't be queered of our browns for you, or none like you."

Then, filling a glass of brandy and placing it to my lips, he added, "Come, young kiddy, he's chafed the outside, here's something to wash the inside of your bag-pipe."

Feeling myself nearly ready to faint, I eagerly drank the proffered dram, and he continued, "Well, my cock, you see you have only got to choose between a white lie and black broth—what's your verdict? If you say no, Jem may have his will of you."

Seeing that I was in the hands of wretches, who would not scruple to execute their threats, and that the only prospect of escaping was to temporise, I replied—"Give me a day or two to consult——"

"Consult the devil!" roared out the whole party in chorus, and the landlord added, "Looke, if you breathe a word of this matter to man or beast, or if you gibbs—you sha'n't have

more time to say prayers nor it takes to gulp down this thimble-full of blue ruin."

At this moment, a rap was heard at the house door. One of the party exclaimed, " Silence ! that's not our signal ! " Another said, in a half whisper, " You may take your oath the sneak has set the beaks to watch." A third threw a shade over the light, and, whilst the remainder drew the bolts across the door, and armed themselves with bludgeons and pistols, the landlord seized me by the collar, dragged me towards the extremity of the chamber, pulled back a sliding pannel, and pushing me forward, closed it upon me. Although my eyes were of no use amidst such utter darkness, my sense of hearing became proportionately acute. For a short time, there was a profound silence. At length, I heard footsteps ; first in the passage, and then upon the stairs. My heart beat almost audibly, for I hoped that these were police officers, and that, ere many minutes, I should be rescued. There was again a silence succeeded by a rap, such as my guide had given at the chamber door, and, to my sorrowful disappointment, the new-comer was admitted, and greeted with a volley of reproaches for causing so much alarm to the party. A long conversation now ensued ; but in so low a tone, that I could only distinguish the occa-

sional oaths and menaces with which it was interlarded. At length, the pannel was drawn back, and I was again dragged forward.

The stranger, who turned out to be Martin's attorney, was a man whose vile and sordid countenance bespoke a mind capable of the most debased and degrading actions. Never were avarice, cruelty, and meanness, so distinctly featured. I had heard that there were many villanous and low men in a profession, in which even the best build their fortunes upon the difficulties and distresses of their fellow-creatures ; but I had no idea that wretches of this kind would be allowed to disgrace the rolls. My reflections were, however, cut short by one of the gang observing, " All your patter, lawyer, may be right up to the mark ; but if we let him mizzle, what's to hinder his splitting ?"

" Cut his throat, I say," exclaimed the ruffian, who had sworn vengeance against me.

" Not so hasty, Jemmy, my good friend," replied the attorney. " Martin's trial will come on in about a month, and there's such strong presumptive evidence, that unless the alibi is proved, it will go hard with him. If he swings, you'll lose a clean five hundred pounds, and, what's more, my good fellow, if he's left in the lurch, he swears he'll lay you all by the heels.

Then turning to me, he added, "Now, Mr. Penguin, can we rely upon you?"

After some hesitation I replied, "Yes."

"Yes is not sufficient. We must have more."

"It is not in my power to give any other assurance than my word."

"Word! I wouldn't take the word of the best man breathing," retorted the attorney.

"If you do not believe me," answered I, "how can you expect the judges to show greater confidence?"

"That's good special pleading," rejoined he; "but we must have some kind of security. You made a deposition upon oral evidence, that Martin was the man who actually committed the murder. This deposition coincides with that of the girl's fancy-man—you must now make affidavit upon ocular evidence that it was not Martin. Let us swear him. Where's a bible?"

At this demand, the whole party burst into a roar of laughter, in which he joined. After they had given vent to their mirth, the attorney begged them to unbind my arms, and bidding me sit down, ordered me to write a statement, the contents of which he dictated. In this, I was made to declare, in the most solemn manner, that, having heard of Martin's arrest for the

murder, I had been impelled by curiosity to visit him, and now voluntarily came forward to perform an act of justice, and to swear that I had seen him enter the Pear-tree a few minutes after I ascended the loft, and that he was amongst the party to whom the highwayman had recounted the details of the murder. I further declared myself ready to substantiate this upon the trial. The attorney, having carefully examined the paper, deposited it in his pocket, and in order to render my statement more coherent, appointed a tavern near Newgate, where I was to meet him upon the following afternoon, and thence to proceed to visit Martin. I promised to comply, and he appeared contented. But the gang were not so easily satisfied. Amidst the fiercest imprecations and menaces, I was compelled to fall upon my knees, to raise my hand to heaven, and to ratify my promise with an oath so terrible, so blasphemous, that my blood chills, even now, at the remembrance.

After disputing with some of the gang touching the non-payment of certain moneys that had been promised him, for procuring false evidence, and other similar services, and threatening not to act for them in future, if they were not more punctual, the attorney tossed down a strong

glass of gin-and-water, and took his leave, accompanied by one of the party. It was well that I had brought nothing valuable with me. For, no sooner had the door closed, than three or four of them, assisted by Sally, rifled my pockets, and finding nothing, vented their anger in kicks and blows. One of them, however, espied the broach given to me by Sophia, and tore it from me. I would rather have lost the whole of my small treasure than this trinket. But my entreaties were as vain as my promises to give the attorney ten pounds if it were immediately restored. I had the further mortification, also, of seeing it forthwith transferred to the bosom of the odious Sally. The landlord, who had not interposed during this transaction, now addressed me, saying, "Although you deserve to be scragged, at once, for the trick you served us down at the Pear-tree, we cannot afford to let Martin swing; so you may waddle; but if you split to man or woman, and don't stand to your word——" here he drew a knife significantly across his throat—"we'll have the change out of you." Then, turning to his daughter, he said, "Sally, my girl, you must go to—you knows where—so you may show him the way back, until you come to a coach-stand."

“ I won’t trust him,” replied she, “ for all his oaths. He said, as he came along, that he was as sharp as a beagle at finding out a track ; and so, to prevent his knowing it better, and bringing the beaks on us, send him across the water in Charley’s wherry. Besides, what’s to prevent his giving me in charge to the watch ?”

“ He’d better hang himself at once, than think of that,” retorted her father. “ But you’re right, lass. Charley, you and Slice have got a crumb of work in Wapping. Take him with you, and start him as soon as you land. Where’s your waterman’s toggery.”

“ Here’s mine,” rejoined the man whom he addressed, taking two coats and badges from a sack, “ and here’s Slice’s.”

“ I’ll go with you, my coves,” said the same villain that had attempted to strangle me, his countenance brightening with a look of diabolical malice.

“ With all our skins,” replied the others, “ only we can’t let you into the job ; it arn’t in buzzman line.”

“ Never mind,” rejoined he, “ I have a job of my own.”

They being ready, I was ordered to accompany them, which I did, inwardly thanking God for my deliverance.

After traversing one or two alleys, we soon came to the water's edge. Here my companions scrambled into one of the barges that lay aground, and bade me follow. Having crossed to the outside of the tier, they came to the end at which their wherry was fastened, and I was ordered to jump in, whilst they remained conversing in a low tone upon the barge. In a short time, however, they joined me, the transported burglar's brother placing himself in the steerage, and the other two at the oars. They then pushed off, and gave way with the flood-tide in the direction of the opposite shore. The night was so pitchy dark that it was with difficulty one could discern the hulls or rigging of the many vessels moored on either side the stream, and it required no small caution to avoid running foul of some of them, but this did not prevent their gliding across with the speed of practised hands. We had already passed the middle of the river, when a sudden blow, intended for the back of my head, but which fortunately only fell upon my left shoulder, pitched me upon my hands. Quick as thought, I wrenched the stretcher from beneath the first rower's feet, sprang round, and, returning the blow upon my antagonist's nose, he fell upon the thwart; but before I could recover my guard,

one of the other men struck me upon the back, and, losing my balance, I fell into the stream. When I rose, I could just distinguish the boat making with all speed for the shore. The only chance, therefore, I had of saving my life, was to strike out in the direction of a tier of vessels, which lay moored at no great distance from the northern side.

It was well that I was an expert swimmer; for otherwise the weight of my clothes and the blows I had received, would soon have sufficed to terminate the deadly work commenced by the ruffians. Such, however, were the exertions I made, and the rapidity of the current, that, ere many minutes, I was borne near the bows of the vessels, and fortunately grasping one of the cables, I succeeded in coiling my leg over it. Then, collecting all my strength, I contrived, after several desperate efforts, to raise myself astride, with my back to the stream, and, in this attitude, called loudly for assistance. I had not long remained in this perilous situation ere a sailor protruded his head over the bows, and hallooed out, "Cable ahoy! who's there?"

"A man overboard," replied I; "help, for God's sake, or I sink."

Calling to two or three of his shipmates who were below, they all ran forward, and I soon per-

ceived one of them glide down the cable with a bowling-knot round his own body, and another rope in his hand, which he made fast under my arms, and then singing out, "Haul away!" I was hoisted up on deck.

Though weak and exhausted at first, I quickly recovered after drinking a glass of warm grog, and having stated to the skipper that I was clerk to Mr. Figmat, and had fallen by accident out of a wherry, he took me into his cabin and gave me a change of clothes, saying he was well acquainted with the worthy merchant, having often met him at Lloyd's. The honest seaman then ordered his gig to be manned, sent me ashore, and permitted one of his men to accompany me home.

My joy at reaching Lothbury may well be imagined. Although it was nearly midnight, the family was still up, and in great alarm at my protracted absence. This alarm increased when they saw the plight I was in, and heard the manner in which I had been rescued from a watery grave. Sophia, who stood by, burst into tears. Her parents attributed these precious tears to the natural tenderness of her nature. But to me they were mute, invaluable tokens of her affection, and I felt that I could have gone through a repetition of the same peril to have

been thus repaid. It was a heavy price to pay for what M. de Lamartine terms the "marrow of the eyes," but when I thought so, I was safe. The sailor having been rewarded with a ten-pound note, tucked up his waistband and took his leave, declaring he hadn't made such a haul since he was at the capture of the Spanish galleons.

The Figmats then pressed me to recount my day's adventures. But I earnestly implored permission to retire, saying, that I was bound by the most solemn oaths not to divulge what had passed. My master and mistress were not well pleased at this reserve, but as Mrs. Figmat began to object, it immediately brought her husband's cough to my assistance, and I was allowed to withdraw, with strict injunctions to have my bed warmed.

No sooner did I reach my chamber and get rid of Jessy Groves, who, whilst she was working away with the warming-pan, told me that Miss Sophy had nigh gone into hysterics during the afternoon, than I threw myself upon my knees, and fervently returned thanks to God for the mercy he had shown me. At the same time, it was not without inward astonishment that I called to mind the old gipsey's warning, and I combined the scene upon the river with that of

my dream. This, and the weight of responsibility that I had incurred by my oath, threw me into such agitation that I lay trembling and writhing the whole night, bewildered with the intensity of my feelings, and bitterly condemning myself for thus being driven to perjury.

What would you have done, reader, had you been in my place that evening? Would you have continued firm, and thus risked that life, to which we all cling with grasping tenacity, or would you have bowed to necessity? Heaven forbid that you should ever be reduced to so miserable an alternative. If you were, you perhaps might have imitated the glorious example of the old martyrs, and preferred death to submission. But I candidly avow that my love of life, or, more properly speaking, my dread of death, overcame every other scruple, and I believe there are few who would not have followed my example. Nevertheless, my weakness, the fear of reproach, and the alarm I felt, not only at the visit I had promised to pay to the murderer, but at the idea of committing perjury in open court, had such an effect upon me, that it was not until near daylight that I fell into a disturbed sleep; during which the events of the last evening were reproduced under forms even still more appalling than those I had encountered.

CHAPTER. XIV.

Wherein grave matter is introduced—I am astonished,
and so perhaps may be the reader.

WHEN I descended to breakfast, the whole family were assembled, with an addition which appeared to me as a gift from Providence. Mr. Rightford, having business to transact in the city, had come up to town late on the preceding evening, and had hastened thus early to visit my master. Although the spirit of our religion does not authorise earthly confession or absolution, a convenience which Luther might as well have permitted for the benefit and consolation of sinners in general, I nevertheless determined to confide my secret to the worthy clergyman. I therefore, at once, put an end to all further questions on the part of the family, by saying,

in reply to their queries, that I trusted Mr. Figmat would not take it disrespectful in me, if I first communicated with Mr. Rightford, and that, if he authorised me, I would then make no secret of all that had passed. The merchant having expressed himself satisfied, I withdrew into another room with my venerable friend, and recounted my adventures, word for word; imploring him, when I had concluded, to guide me with his counsels, and to tell me if he thought I had committed a great sin in submitting to the demands of the ruffians, and whether this sin was enhanced by violating my oath of secrecy.

“Sacred as I consider all promises, and still more sacred and inviolable all moral and legal oaths,” replied Mr. Rightford, “I will hasten to relieve your conscience, by replying, No!—To have exasperated these wicked men, by refusal, would have been a wanton sacrifice of your life, nay, a mock-heroic act more immoral than submission. It would have been in opposition to the divine precepts, of which I could quote various instances. An oath administered under such circumstances cannot be held valid either in human or divine law, and you will therefore be as readily absolved by your divine Judge, as you would be by every earthly tribunal. I will go farther; it is incumbent upon you

to communicate the whole proceeding to the magistrates : in lieu of screening one murderer by an act of perjury, which indeed would be a grievous sin, you are bound to tell the truth, and thus bring to light the attempt of a second. You erred in swearing ; (if indeed, it be an error, to submit to the most aggravated compulsion, in order to save yourself from instant death :) but if you now fulfil your oath, you will be guilty of a premeditated crime ; committed after mature deliberation, and clothed with all the solemnity and amidst the security of a court of justice—and what for ? not to shield your conscience, for adherence will be more wicked than infraction ; but to protect you from the idle menaces of these wretches, whose only object in assisting the culprit is to obtain the reward of their services through your instrumentality. No ! no ! my young friend, if you wish to perform a proper duty to the laws, the public, and yourself, you must hasten to denounce the whole affair, and aid justice in its course. In my humble opinion, it is equally criminal to procure the enlargement of a murderer, by false evidence, as it is to swear away the life of an innocent man. For, although the former may escape human retribution, he will not evade that of Heaven, when the latter will meet with his

reward. And what is the short span of pains or pleasures in this world, to the immeasurable torments or delights of the next?"

"Your assurances, sir," replied I, "have greatly relieved my mind. But I will honestly confess that I still feel exceeding repugnance at breaking my oath of secrecy. For I cannot forget that they might and would have killed me, had it not been for the interposition of the landlord, and that I owe my escape entirely to my oath. My life was in their hands, and they spared me."

"Not from mercy to you," rejoined Mr. Rightford, "but from fear of losing the promised five hundred pounds: but, even admitting what you say, your engagement was cancelled by the subsequent attempt to drown you."

"True, sir; but the landlord, attorney, and others, villains as they are, were not privy to this, and it would be impossible for me to denounce the burglar's brother and the pretended waterman, without detailing the whole affair. Besides, although my history is known to a few, I could not bear the shame of having it exposed in public courts, and papers, which would be the inevitable result of my coming forward. Is it not possible for me to leave the affair as it is, and neither appear for nor against Martin?"

“It is possible,” answered Mr. Rightford, “but you will thus omit a duty, which you owe to the public. Nor can I approve of your motives. Misfortunes, independent of your own control, placed you in a situation, of which others have greater reason to be ashamed than yourself; and you ought not to be deterred by any feelings of false pride, from boldly standing forward.”

“But, sir, I can give no evidence as to the fact of the poor girl’s murder, whilst, to account for the little I know, I must reveal to the world many circumstances which were better concealed for my own sake, for the honour of my master’s house, and—” here I hesitated,—“for the feelings of his daughter, to whom I am tenderly attached. The charge made against me by the cruel usher is not yet entirely done away with, and, although he is said to have fled to America under suspicious circumstances, he might come forward.”

“I would have you do nothing that can reflect discredit upon such excellent people as my worthy friends,” returned Mr. Rightford, “but they are too sensible to be biassed by such revelations: as to the usher’s accusation, I should think you had nothing to fear in that quarter; Mr. Figmat knows all, does he not?”

“Not to the full extent,” answered I, “and even if he did, it is possible that his pride would be wounded at its publicity; and if he did not dismiss me, he might withdraw his confidence, and never consent to that, which is now the sole object of my future ambition.”

“Well ! there is some reason in this,” replied Mr. Rightford, “and I will, therefore, not insist upon your proceeding further : but the miserable attorney holds your declaration.”

“He does, and I am resolved to meet him, and to declare, that, unless he restore it, I will come forward and denounce him and his infamous clients. I can apprehend no danger from him in broad daylight. If you see no objection, I will fulfil my promise of visiting Martin, and since he relies upon my false swearing, it will be merciful to inform him that he must abandon that hope.”

At this moment Figmat entered the room, exclaiming, “Excuse my interruption. Penguin, my boy, I have business for you which I little expected: here are letters just arrived from my correspondents at Alexandria—a pretty affair—Dateskin and Cotton have failed, and have let me in for nearly ten thousand. There’s something wrong in this; it must be looked to. I cannot go over myself; nor have I any one in

whom I would sooner confide than in you. Young as you are, you have got an oldish head upon your shoulders. Are you prepared, then, to start, per mail, for Liverpool, and to embark? A pleasant trip for a young man—there's a vessel of mine, a fast copper-bottomed brig, will sail with a general cargo, wind fair, on Monday week. We shall have eight days to settle matters and rig you out for the voyage. I'll write to the skipper to lay in a little extra stock."

I hailed this announcement, not only as a great proof of my master's confidence, but as a fortunate means of escaping from the embarrassment of Martin's affair, and I therefore replied, that I was much flattered by his good opinion, and was ready to go anywhere he chose, and to serve him to the best of my power: I then added, that I was prepared to communicate the occurrences of the past day.

"Tell them to the ladies, tell them to the ladies," answered he, "I have other matters to think of: I must make some calls and consult my solicitor; that will detain me until near dinner. After that, we will look over the books, and begin to arrange matters for the voyage. Mr. Rightford, are you walking my way?—Confound the rogues! ten thousand! this is rather heavy."

I then said, that I had a little business near the Old-Bailey. "Go," said he "go; hang Dateskin and Cotton, I wish I had them there;" and so saying, he bustled out of the room, followed by Mr. Rightford, to whom I promised to communicate the result of my interview with the attorney and Martin.

Mid-day being the hour appointed with the former, I lost no time in proceeding to the tavern, which, it appeared, was one of those low, flash houses, resorted to by well-known bad characters, but tolerated and licensed by the police, as many other bad things are, for purposes best known to themselves. As I crossed the reeking tap-room towards the bar, I perceived more than one of the faces I had seen in the Borough, but they pretended not to recognise me. Upon asking the host for Mr. Slipknot, such being the name I was directed to inquire for, he pointed with a knowing leer to the front-parlour, taking me, no doubt, for one of the attorney's villanous clients. Upon seeing me, Slipknot rubbed his hands, and expressed great satisfaction at my punctuality; then, asking me what I would like to drink, or rather what I chose to pay for, he added, "I see, my good fellow, that you're a man of your word: I didn't expect you'd come to the scratch."

“ It was not the fault of the villain you called Jem, or his infamous associates, that I have done so,” replied I.

“ God bless my soul, my dear friend,” answered he, “ they’re three as honest fellows as any in their line. What do you mean?”

“ Why, that the cowardly ruffians tried to murder me, and threw me overboard last night.”

“ God bless me,” replied he, “ an accident, I dare say. Accidents constantly happen upon the river. Those wherries are cursed dangerous, especially when Oliver’s out of town.”

“ It was done with malice aforethought,” returned I; “ but no more of that, here I am.”

“ I never heard of such a breach of contract, my good fellow,” rejoined he: “ it’s against all rules; but they shall smart for it,—they sha’n’t touch a penny of the five hundred.”

“ Nor you either,” answered I, coolly: “ no, sir, your gang——”

“ My gang! Take care, my good friend, or, by God, I’ll sue you for defamation: I wish I’d a witness.”

“ That you shall not have,” rejoined I, interposing between him and the door, to which he was moving: then, turning the key, I added, “ You may think yourself fortunate that I do not expose you.”

This rather startled him: but, throwing a forced and hideous smile into his countenance, he answered, "Do not be in a passion: it will all be right. You'll be pleased to remember, my good fellow, that I stood your friend last night, when Jem intended to save you from a ducking."

"You did," retorted I; "you and the landlord saved my life perhaps: I am grateful for that, and will, therefore, hold my promise of secrecy, and have kept my engagement."

"Ah, my good friend," answered he, "I thought you would listen to reason; so now let us proceed to visit poor Martin."

"As soon as you please; but I will tell you fairly that it is not my intention to fulfil the oath you forced upon me."

"If I had known that," replied he, biting his lips and scowling at me——

"You would have aided them to murder me. Hark you, Mr. Slipknot," continued I, "the tables are now turned. I need not tell you that I know you to be a villain, leagued with robbers and murderers, and participating in their spoils; but I will tell you that your infamy shall not succeed with me. I must have back the declaration you forced from me last night."

"Impossible!" rejoined he; "I will not part

with it for less than five hundred : if you'll pay that, Martin may swing for all I care."

" You will produce it forthwith," answered I, " or take the consequences."

" I'll be d——d if I do," retorted he, shuffling towards the door ; but I laid my hand upon his collar, and held him. Upon this, he said, " No violence, no violence ! or I'll swear an assault against you."

" If you make any noise," rejoined I, " or refuse to give me back the paper, you are lost. Do you see those two police officers over the way ? I took the precaution to bring them with me in case of need. If you refuse, I will fling up the sash, and give you in charge." Slipknot now turned deadly pale, and, begging me to unhand him, swore, most solemnly, the paper was left at his residence. " It is false !" retorted I, darting my hand into his breast-pocket, and drawing forth the document : " it is here."

I then released him, tore it into fragments, and cast it upon the fire, whilst he stood by, trembling and writhing his hands with suppressed fury. After a pause, he recovered, and said, " I see through the whole business : it's a regular do. This is the only reward one gets for a good action. May I be d——d if ever I try to save another life, or believe an oath

again. May I ask," added he, "if you intend to stand to the alibi?"

"You will see that," rejoined I, "when we reach Newgate: the sooner we set off the better."

"I will meet you there," answered he.

"Accompany me, or I will denounce the whole affair," retorted I, putting on my hat, and moving to the door.

"You are d——d hard to deal with, my good friend, this morning; and you have risen your price properly since last night," said he, reluctantly following me.

In a few minutes more, we were at the doors of Newgate. After the usual formalities, we were admitted within the first wicket. Whilst the attorney was conversing with the principal turnkey, I had time to look around. It was not without feelings of deepest awe and emotion that I gazed on the various emblems that decorated the vestibule of this mighty pass-house of dissoluteness and crime. There reigned a dismal silence, a stern and gloomy solidity, an oppressive atmosphere, that struck heavily and sorrowfully upon the heart,—a sensation rendered still more acute by my observing, in the turnkey's chamber, some pots of flowers, in full bloom, and seeing some tame birds at liberty :

the gaudy blossoms of the one, and the gay notes of the other, forming a strange contrast with the dreary character of the place. The guardians, brawny and repulsive-looking men, whose countenances betrayed little traces of care or feeling, moved mechanically—slowly, as if time were indifferent to them, or as if they were mere detached portions of the stony mass. Shepherds of a hellish flock, they appeared insensible to remorseful tears or hardened curses. Their finer feelings deadened by constant intercourse with crime, they seemed to watch us, not that we might bring hope to innocence, but add increase or novelty to guilt.

Presently we were allowed to proceed, attended by a turnkey. Awful as the whole appeared, I felt a strange curiosity to see more of it; but I had little time for observation as we moved along the dimly-lighted corridors. One court we traversed, filled with culprits of all ages, and paused a moment. Some sat alone, their heads bent down, absorbed in gloomy meditations, or seeking to beguile the time in reading the bible. Others walked up and down in pairs, fiercely gesticulating, and muttering curses. Some, reckless of their awful situation, though condemnation stared them in the face, clanked their irons in chorus to a loose and

hardened song. Others, again, bounded after the flying fives' ball, displaying the agility of hearts and bodies free from shackles. Some stood aloof, with folded arms, their jaws clenched, their eyes fixed on vacancy—their thoughts wide away, perhaps with their lost homes: innocence and hope far, far behind,—exile or death immediately before them. There was one man, whose noble head and manly figure were worthy of the great Grecian's chisel. He leaned against the wall; a weeping woman by his side, and in his arms an infant. Never was paternal tenderness or moral agony more strongly depicted, than in that man's pallid countenance, as, with one arm round the female's waist, he kissed the babe, and bedewed its smiling features with his scalding tears. Never was unconscious innocence more strongly contrasted with repentant guilt, than in the infant's look and movements; as with one tiny hand grasping the culprit's grizzly beard, with the other it pressed his sunken cheeks, or strove to catch the polished fetters which girt his limbs. He was a man of birth and education, the turnkey said, ruined by bad company and play: his crime forgery—his punishment the scaffold. Several felons, having recognised the attorney, gathered around him. To escape their impor-

tunities, we moved quickly on, amidst shouts of wildest uproar; which, with the whole scene, reminded me of those noble passages wherein Milton describes the fallen angels, after the dissolution of the Stygian council.

“Each his several way
Pursued, as inclination or sad choice
Led him, perplexed where he might likeliest find,
’Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours.”

At length, we came to the door of Martin’s chamber. My limbs began to tremble with mingled dread and suspense. The principal object of my curiosity was about to be satisfied. In a few moments more, I should know whether my long-cherished presentiments were well-founded—I should know whether this man was the detested usher—the wanton persecutor of my youth, the murderer, seducer, and betrayer of others. The ponderous bolts were now drawn back; the massive key revolved, the door was pushed open, and the inmate, starting from the pallet on which he was reclining, sat up, and proved to me that I had not been mistaken. It was Nibshort, the blood-stained usher; more hideous, more ghastly than when I had last seen him, triumphing in the full stretch of malice.

Though prepared for my visit, he seemed for a moment to quail before me—a convulsive shudder overspread his features;—but it was more the expression of blasted pride, than that of shame or repentance.

The attorney was about to speak, when Martin, suddenly recovering his self-possession, interrupted him, saying, “You may spare yourself the trouble of an introduction, Mr. Penguin and I are old acquaintances.”

“And a d——d hard fellow to deal with: he has done us, by God,” retorted Slipknot.

“We have foiled ourselves,” replied the prisoner. “But more of that presently; Mr. Penguin and I have an account to balance. Before I expect justice—justice!” repeated he, sternly but significantly—“from others I must accord it to him. Young man, I injured you some years past in a manner that demands public reparation. I shall not disclose my motives, nor are they of any importance now. They are connected with the history of my life—not with yours. That history may appear when I am gone. But, although I may be a murderer, a forger, and guilty of a thousand villanies, and although I can neither recal the dead, nor efface the traces of my hand or crimes——”

“For God’s sake, my good friend,” said Slip-

knot, pointing to the door which stood ajar, "the turnkeys and doctor will hear you—you'll floor our alibi if you plead guilty."

"Be it so," rejoined Nibshort; "but that shall not prevent my performing one good act, before I wind my accounts in this world."

"He's turned methodist!" ejaculated the attorney, aside.

"Penguin," continued Martin, stretching forth his left hand, "you may take this; it is not blood-stained. Penguin, I ask your forgiveness"—and here, methought, I saw a tear moisten his eyelid, and his lip quiver—"Penguin, I grossly calumniated you—it was I that placed the marked money in your desk—you are innocent as a lamb. Here," said he, taking pen and paper and writing rapidly, "here is a declaration to that effect, which shall be attested by a more creditable witness than my good friend there."

"Thank you, Mr. Martin," replied the other; "this is all one gets from you cracksmen for risking one's life and character."

"Character!" exclaimed Martin with a sneer; "if ever man deserved hanging more than I, it is you, and all those who are like you."

He then placed the written paper in my hand. O selfish weakness of our nature! at that

moment I felt my horror of the man diminish. Murderer, outcast, villain as he was, and said he was, I forgave him—my heart seemed bursting with conflicting emotions. I even pitied him, and, if I could have opened the prison doors and have set him free, I would have done so. I shall be condemned for this morbid sensibility. No matter: I am here to avow, not to conceal my sentiments. After a moment's pause, I pressed his hand; it was cool, steady, and less agitated than mine.

“I forgive you, Mr. Martin,” said I, “willingly forgive you, and regret——”

“Spare your regrets,” replied he, “I am not worthy of them. But your forgiveness and my confession are a great relief, for it was a dirty act, and has cost me more compunction than if I had stabbed you. I can look the scaffold boldly in the face. *Malè vivet quisquis nesciet benè mori.*”

“Not a bit of it,” exclaimed Slipknot; “we’ve got the alibi, if you will but hold your d——d canting patter.”

“You’re a fool as well as knave,” rejoined Martin, looking at him with ineffable contempt: “murder, forgery, and other crimes, will inevitably be proved against me. My accomplices were arrested yesterday, and have turned

king's evidence. I shall plead 'not guilty;' not in hopes of saving my life, but, because I do not choose to resign it without an effort; besides, I intend to let the world know of what stuff I am made. I will conquer their admiration, though I cannot obtain their pity."

"Mad as a March hare," ejaculated Slipknot, in an under tone; then he added, aloud; "as you plead 'not guilty,' you'll want the alibi and my assistance."

"Neither," rejoined Martin. "I have injured that gentleman sufficiently. I will not urge him to perjure himself, nor will I trouble you. His reputation would be ruined by the one, and my character suffer by the other."

"Thank you, my good friend," replied the attorney; "this comes of helping such dare-devils as you are. I shall go over, and see whether Bill and Ned will turn up their noses."

"You may go where you please, sir," retorted the other, "and the sooner the better."

Slipknot took the hint, and departed. When he was gone, Martin resumed the thread of his discourse, saying, "Yes, Mr. Penguin, I shall die without fear or remorse."

"Without remorse!" said I; "surely that is impossible."

"It is true, though," answered he. "When I

abandoned myself to crime, I knew that I placed myself in flagrant hostility to human and divine laws. A race then commenced between me and justice. I knew the penalty of violating the social compact. I also knew that I must then sign a bond with the scaffold, as others are said to have done with the devil. I resolved to embrace all the consequences of my pact, and, in truth, I would sooner die suddenly by the rope than by lingering illness. I am not one of those common minds that measure things by the yard, and think nothing good that is not durable. I take the ball at the bound. The most exquisite enjoyments are the most ephemeral. It's the study of all great minds to condense much in a small space. The influence of conscience and the execution of crime are incompatibilities: when I broke with society, and steeled my nerves to the latter, I utterly stifled the former, or I could not have commenced. I have committed more than one murder—you may well start—yes, and I did so premeditatedly, in every instance, save that of the bar-maid. That was the mere instinct of self-preservation. But, although I have felt neither remorse nor compunction for these desperate crimes, I cannot support the idea of having been guilty of a

mean and dirty act, such as drove you from Thistle-house."

"What strange contradiction!" replied I. "Ah, sir! it is unfortunate for me, that this consideration did not deter you at the moment."

"True; but I had an object then in view; you, I thought, might be the means of frustrating it, and so I resolved to remove you. Strange as it may appear, that act has cost me more regret than any other crime. I am no petty malefactor, no vile calumniator. If ever I betrayed another, it was to prevent his betraying me. Between me and the noble freebooters of old, who robbed, murdered and tortured by wholesale, there is only the difference of power and issue. What they did through the agency of others, and with a conviction of impunity, I have done boldly, with my own hand, and with foreknowledge of the risk and responsibility. I anticipated hatred, loathing, curses. I expect neither pity nor sympathy; but I will not merit contempt."

"What hideous sophistry; what monstrous logic," thought I, as I was about to reply, and to inform him honestly, that it was not my intention to have fulfilled the oath imposed upon me on the preceding evening, when the door opened, and the prison physician, accompanied

by two other gentlemen, entered. The former, courteously addressing Martin, said, "I hope you will excuse me for taking the liberty to bring two medical friends, who are zealous disciples of the Spurzhean system. Hearing of the charge brought against you, they are extremely desirous to obtain permission to examine your phrenological developements."

"You are somewhat hasty, gentlemen," replied the prisoner, half contemptuously; "but I am not sorry for it. I think you will find my bumps in complete opposition to your theories. I know something of the science," continued he, "and have often amused myself with the contradiction between the energy of my instinctive propensities, and their want of external development. I say instinctive; for the impulse of crime is innate in me. It began to show itself, nearly as soon as I felt that others were wealthy, and I poor."

"We shall find appropriativeness stand forth, like the cupola of St. Paul's," observed the second phrenologist.

"I beg your pardon, as flat as Newmarket heath. Here, gentlemen," added Martin, sitting calmly upon the edge of his bed, and fastening his pocket-handkerchief round his fetters, "remark the crown of my head. It is round, pro-

minent even, and denoting a fair stock of devotion. Now, I do not think I ever prayed twice in my life: and when compelled to attend church, I have generally employed my time in calculating and combining fresh crimes."

My blood almost turned cold, when I heard this horrible avowal. The two phrenologists put on their spectacles, and, after feeling his head, shook theirs, but said nothing.

"Look at this short, vigorous neck, and the parts adjacent," continued Martin: "they bespeak amativeness and philoprogenitiveness. Now, it so happens, that children are insupportable to me. That accounts for my being so fond of flogging and caning the boys, whilst I was usher at Dr. Birchell's: this gentleman," pointing to me, "can tell you something on that score. Then, as for women, I never loved in my life: and have only looked upon them as instruments of utility or pleasure. Perhaps," added he, "that proceeded from the consciousness of my ugliness. And yet, *de gustibus*, there's no disputing. Mr. Penguin, unfortunately for himself, knew that I did once inspire a passion in the breast of a lady. Ah! confound it! if I had fully succeeded there, I should have got ten thousand pounds, and with that, in America, I might have kept out of mischief, at least until it was spent; then," added

he, with a ghastly emphasis, "I might, perhaps, have murdered her. But I have no right to make myself worse than I am."

The phrenologists listened with as much awe and wonder as I did. Filling himself a glass of sherry, and exclaiming, "This is not Falernian, '*Nata mecum consule Manlio*,'*" he continued, "Pass your hands over my forehead and the lateral parts, and you will find that all the cerebral organs connected with the intellectual faculties are infinitely more strongly pronounced than those which, according to your doctrine, give impulse to the animal propensities. My skull would be a treasure to Dr. Blumenbach: I think I shall bequeath it to him.† So far there is no contradiction: I am a good scholar, a fair logician; I have a retentive memory, and am fond of music and the arts."

"I think we have the bump of combativeness pretty camel-like here," said one of the examiners.

"Then it speaks falsely," replied Martin. "I am not quarrelsome, and hate fighting; I am no coward, however, as you shall see, if you

* Horace's exclamation at the moment he was about to be put to death.

† Dr. Blumenbach, the celebrated Professor of Natural History and Philosophy at the University of Gottingen, and an opponent of Dr. Gall's system.

assist at the miserable spectacle which will probably give you a right to examine the in as well as the outside of this poor brain. You will then find that I shall mount the tree with as much indifference as boys climb after a bird's-nest. Others will suffer with me, for the recorder's list is heavy :—I shall watch them with the same minute curiosity as you will, and when my turn comes, you may make your comparisons, and draw your conclusions : I shall not have time to communicate mine.”

The cold-blooded indifference with which the prisoner carried on this conversation filled us all with mingled astonishment and horror : this was not diminished when he proceeded, “ Do you remember the words of Epaminondas, upon being asked which he thought the greatest man, Chabrias, Iphicrates, or himself : ‘ Wait until you see us all three die,’ was his reply. In truth, the moment to judge of a man, is when he performs the last scene of life's comedy. We may wear a mask all the rest of our lives, but there is no trifling with the death-rattle. Solon said to Cræsus, *ante obitum nemo beatus* ; and he said what was very presumptuous, for the ‘ to come ’ is all a ‘ mystery. But I will say that *ante obitum omnes agunt histriones* : no man shows himself in his true colours until death stands at his elbow. I have had the

monster for my bedfellow these twenty years ;— he may have physical conquest, but no moral power over me. I do not care a straw to lose what was given without my consent. There is great truth, I think, in the saying of the sage: ‘ *Vitam nemo acciperet, si daretur scientibus.*’ If we had the choice, there is not one man in a million who would wish to have been born.”

One of the gentlemen, thunderstruck by the manner in which Martin perverted these philosophical maxims to his own abominable uses, now exclaimed, “ Good God, sir ! how is it that, with such a mind, with such powers of reasoning, your intelligence has not guided you in the right path ?—how is it that it has not preserved you from the assaults of what you term your instinctive propensities ? ”

“ Because instinct, which some physiologists call the link between mere animal mechanism and genius, is more powerful than reason : it is the impulsive organ in man as well as brutes. Destiny is the offspring of instinct ; and the latter, like a good parent, leads the former to its accomplishment. I have consulted my intelligence, and it has replied, ‘ strike or you will be smitten.’ A classic author has said, that ‘ to lend your counsels to another is but to light his candle at your own lamp ; thus increasing

his light without diminishing your own.' But my intelligence left me in the dark, or only lighted me on to see that society and I were at eternal variance. It was necessary that one or the other should be the victim : instinct bade me prefer myself ;—besides, when I first had recourse to crime, I had no alternative between that and suicide—moral or physical."

"It is the common practice with all criminals," observed one of the gentlemen, "to put forward this monstrous excuse, and to attribute their crimes to the same cause. Society did not war against you, until you threw down the gauntlet to her."

"The proof of this, Mr. Martin," said I, "is, that you might have lived honestly and prosperously, had you chosen to continue at Thistlehouse. You were there respectably situated, and might have remained at peace with yourself and all mankind."

"It was too late," retorted he ; "my hand was already imbrued in blood. I was leagued with men who would not permit me to escape them : I was sold to them : retrocession was impossible ;—I stood upon the brink of a precipice, into which one or other could hurl me at a moment's notice. My first crime was, as I stated, the child of necessity. I had a debt of honour to repay : I had not the means. I

had only to choose between dishonour and the road. I met with resistance from a sturdy grazier returning from Blackwater-fair—I killed him, and paid my debt: I was launched. The ball grew like one of snow. I started without compunction, and continued without remorse. From that time, I swore hatred to mankind, and have kept my promise.”

“Horrible! horrible!” exclaimed the whole of us. When we had a little recovered, one of the gentlemen said, “You talked of suicide just now, and previously of your indifference to death. You, who seem so punctilious about honour, and say you were driven to commit murder in order to preserve yourself from disgrace! have you no desire to evade the ignominy of the gibbet by——”

“Making my quietus with a bare bodkin?” coolly interposed Martin. “None, sir. If you were to offer me the deadliest and quickest hemlock, and give me thirty days to consider, as occurred to Socrates, I would not follow his example, though I shall die with equal resolution. The coward fears and flies death; the sage awaits it; the madman seeks it: *feras, non culpes, quod vitari non potest*. It might occur to me, as it did to Lucius Domitius, whose nose bleeding after he had taken poison, it so frightened him that he repented, and called

for emetics. I know you will cite Othon, Pomponius Atticus, Cleanthes, and many other illustrious philosophers and heroes, who died by their own hands; but I choose to show my heroism after my own fashion, and will give you the authority of Scipio and Plato, who held suicide to be cowardly and unworthy of a great mind. You will admit that there is greater merit in wearing one's chain than in breaking it, and more dignity in the conduct of Regulus than that of Cato. Cleomenes advises us to husband our lives until the last moment: 'You can always get rid of it,' says he, 'but remember that a favourable turn may come: it is the part of fools only to throw away chances.' You see, gentlemen," added Martin, "that I know whence to draw my authorities."

"And to pervert them also," replied the doctor: "it is melancholy to see so much instruction, so much pure philosophy, applied to such sad purposes."

Martin shook his head in a solemn manner, and then answered, "I have another motive, which you phrenologists will doubtless attribute to my bump of devotedness. Now it does happen that I am not an atheist, and have just sufficient faith in the doctrines of our religion to believe that self-murder is an aggravation of

crime. What, then, should I gain by suicide?—little alleviation in this world, and an increase of punishment in the next. Besides, sir, there are devotees in all countries;—the rahjpoot puts on his saffron robe, and rushes forth to slay,—another decks himself in his festal tunic, and casts himself beneath Juggernaut's wheels,—a third drowns himself in the Ganges,—and a fourth burns herself upon her husband's pile;—this immolates himself to one idol—that to another;—my idol," added he, raising his voice, and standing up before us with a degree of fiendlike dignity that made us all shudder, "my idol is the scaffold!"

After a few seconds, during which Martin walked up and down the room with folded arms, the doctor said, "Well, Mr. Martin, if it does come to that terrible alternative, for which you seem to be so strangely prepared, we shall see how you will conduct yourself. It has been my painful duty to witness death frequently and for various crimes. You will excuse me if I observe, that I never saw a murderer who submitted to his fate without quailing at the last moment."

"It would be against nature and religion were it otherwise," exclaimed one of the other gentlemen.

The doctor proceeded. "The fever, the stubborn workings of a hardened conscience, may bear them up until hope is fled, and they stand with eternity, endless and unfathomable, before them; but, thank God, for their own sakes, and for the force of example, they invariably give up at last, and prove that, although they may affect to defy the stings of conscience, conscience and religion ultimately obtain the victory." Martin listened, shook his head, and smiled negatively. The doctor continued: "And here is the singular distinction between men executed for crimes of this nature and those who suffer for political causes. History teems with examples. The political convict, supported by some strange, exhilarating power, faces death with serenity and stoicism, and maintains the conviction of his rectitude to the last gasp."

"Because," added one of the others, "he consoles and supports himself with an idea that, although he may have sinned against human institutions, he has not infringed those of God. That which supports a man upon his death-bed, is the hope of forgiveness in the next world, no matter how he may have erred in this. The murderer cannot entertain such an expectation, and thence betrays final weakness.

Political murderers—regicides for instance—are also often insane, or, at all events, in such a state of mental excitement and delusion that, in freeing the world from those whom they set down as tyrants, they flatter themselves they have performed a meritorious act, and look to the crown of martyrdom. But whatever be the latent cause, the distinction is borne out by a multitude of authorities.”

“We shall see, we shall see,” exclaimed Martin. Then saying, “Gentlemen, I am grateful for your visit,” he added, “I wish to perform one act of justice, an oasis in my desert of crime;—I will thank you, therefore, to attest this paper.”

They read it, affixed their names, and withdrew. The prisoner begged me to remain a moment. He then calmly asked me many questions, and conversed upon worldly matters with astonishing indifference. At length, after urging me once more to forgive him, and to pay him another visit before my embarkation, he said that he wished to be left alone. I took my leave, and returned to Lothbury, where I found Mr. Rightford, to whom I showed the declaration of my innocence, and narrated my interview with the man, or rather the monster, whom divine retribution had, at length, so justly overtaken.

CHAPTER XVI.

Showing the generosity of Figmat's heart, and the tenderness of that of Sophia—I take leave of my English friends, and the French take me without leave—I fire my first shot, and substantiate another portion of my dream thereby, which brings us nearer to a conclusion.

THE next eight days were occupied in preparations for the voyage. I first called upon Mr. Robsome, who drily informed me that, as I had chosen to take my own course, I must abide by the consequences. I then waited upon Lady Castlerose and Lady Delphine. My conversation with both was brief and embarrassed, and I escaped as soon as possible. After that, I wrote to M. de Florennes and Dr. Birchell: the former replied with the kindness of a parent, the latter with the reserve of a man who

knew he had been unjust towards me. He informed me, however, that, amongst other offences, Martin had committed forgery upon him to a great amount.

The last evening now arrived, and was rendered still more sorrowful by the sudden and dangerous illness of the worthy merchant, who had been confined for three days to his bed. I being occupied from morning to night with business, and Sophia constantly engaged in attending her father, no opportunity occurred for touching upon the subject nearest my heart. During our last melancholy meal, Mrs. Figmat only interrupted the silence to indulge in sinister apprehensions regarding her husband, intermingled with expressions of regret at my departure. As Sophia lingered a moment behind when they rose from table, I mustered courage to take her hand, and, in a faltering voice, exclaimed, “Thanks, thanks for all your kindness,—my heart——”—here my emotion had nigh run me into a scrape, but I restrained myself, and she hurried out of the room.

Soon after this, I was summoned to Figmat’s chamber. When I entered, he bade me sit down by his bed-side, and proceeded to give me his final instructions. Having settled all these matters, he beckoned his daughter to him,

and said, "Sophy, my dear, come closer: what I am going to say regards you both."

She approached, her face tinged with blushes, nor was I less embarrassed or alarmed.

"Hark ye, Penguin," continued he; "I have discovered that you love my daughter, but that you have not imparted your sentiments to her: this does you credit, and increases my confidence."

Sophia now rose, and would have quitted the room, but Figmat held her hand, and added, "Stay, my dear child, you need not be ashamed, — I have not strength to say much, but I will honestly declare that I have no objection to your being married at some future time. Continue to deserve my confidence, Peregrine, and you may be a happy fellow."

Overwhelmed with surprise and joy, I poured forth my thanks in the best language I was master of, and promised to devote my whole life to merit his favour and his daughter's good opinion.

Figmat replied in an earnest manner, "I have a foreboding that it will go hard with me. If it is God's will that I should not rise from this bed, his will be done: I shall depart in peace with all mankind. I have done my duty to my neighbour, and I trust to Him also who

has mercifully raised me to prosperity, and blessed me with domestic happiness."

Sophia and her mother now burst into tears, and I had much difficulty to control my feelings. After a few minutes' pause, the merchant pressed his daughter's hand and mine, and, in a voice that showed he was making an effort to speak, continued, "All I have, will, some day or another, belong to Sophy. Penguin, you have behaved honourably and discreetly. You have my permission, and that of my wife, to settle the rest with her; but not at present: I will have no engagements—you are going to be separated: she may change, and so may you."

"Never, sir, never!" replied I.

"Well, well, time will show," answered he, whilst Sophia, her face reclining upon her father's arm, made a negative sign with her hand. "We must now bid each other good-bye," continued Mr. Figmat; "the sooner you return the better. God bless you!"

I threw myself on my knees, and, pressing the generous merchant's hand to my lips, said a few grateful words, and withdrew.

Before daylight on the following morning, I was ready to depart. Mrs. Figmat came down, but Sophia did not appear. I was in some

measure consoled for this: for, as I followed my luggage into the coach, Jessy Groves met me, and, wiping the corner of her eye with that of her apron, whispered, "Miss Sophy sends her love, sir; but, poor thing, she has taken on so that she's quite in a fever, and her Ma wouldn't let her get up."

Within three days from this time, my chattels and body were stowed away on board the "Fair Sophia," and out of sight of land. I soon regained my spirits, and astonished the captain and mate, not only with my familiarity with maritime matters, but with my maritime appetite. The latter is inconsistent with the rigid laws of sentiment; but to love, one must live, and to live, one must eat. It is unfortunate that I have neither tempests nor sea-fights to narrate; but, this being a true history, I am bound to say that the waters were smooth, the winds fair, and the French privateers, as if out of gallantry to the fast-sailing craft, which was honoured with the name of my dear mistress, did not interrupt our progress.

Three fourths of our voyage were already sped, and the "Fair Sophia" bounded merrily and swiftly over the tideless waters of the Mediterranean. "If it holds like this," said the captain "we shall make our run in the shortest time

ever done by a merchant vessel." But alas ! it did not hold, for, of a sudden, the wind chopped round in our very teeth, and blew so fiercely, that it carried away our fore top-mast, and drove us close in upon the Sardinian coast, at no great distance from Cape Malfata. By one of those transitions constantly occurring in these seas—a dead calm and dense fog succeeded the preceding gale. After twenty-four hours, however, the weather brightened, but not our prospects, for to our utter dismay we found ourselves in the midst of three large armed feluccas, who no sooner made us out, than they hoisted French colours, and bore down towards us. Resistance or flight were both impossible. They were filled with men, and were aided by their sweeps.

The master, after secreting some bank-notes in the lining of his trousers, tossing off a stiff glass of grog, and recommending me to follow his example, he first showed his colours, and then hauled them down again in token of submission. Then, seating himself quietly on the binnacle, he returned the French shot with a volley of English oaths, and awaited the result. It was not long coming; in less than twenty minutes the enemy laid us on board, jumped on deck, and took possession. After pillaging whatever money and valuables they could find, and beating

us because we had not the productive powers of the Mint; after feasting upon English porter, a great treat to thirsty French sailors, and then amusing themselves with calling us, "God dems and Ross-biffs," an equally satisfactory diversion to the wits of that nation, a prize crew was put on board, our own was transferred to the three feluccas, and a breeze springing up, our poor brig and her captors made sail for the nearest continental port, which chanced to be Naples.

Black was indeed my prospect; black the horrible hole in which we were incarcerated, and blacker still the ration of bread which was sparingly served out to us by way of refreshment. I have said somewhere that a ball-room was an admirable place for meditation, I had not then tried the damp straw of a dungeon.

No amelioration took place in our situation for nearly a week, when, one morning, I was summoned to the governor's office, who informed me that I should be permitted to go out upon parole, a favour obtained for me through the influence of Count Capo Vento, the admiral; who, had he not sailed the previous evening, upon a sudden expedition to the Sicilian coast, had intended to summon me before him. I did not much care or trouble myself about his excellency's motives, or stop to ask why the master and

mate were not included, but went through the necessary formalities, and then followed a sergeant of gend'armes, who conducted me to a house, where he directed lodging and rations to be furnished me.

The first use I made of my liberty was to seek for a merchant, who, notwithstanding the continental system, carried on considerable contraband business with our house, through Sicily and Malta. He received me civilly, and, upon ascertaining, by reference to the brig's papers, that I was what I represented myself to be, not only promised to forward my letters, but advanced me a small sum for my immediate necessities. This rendered my situation more palatable, and I sought to beguile the time by visiting the public monuments and galleries by day, and by wandering at night near the sea-side. I was recommended, however, not to go entirely unarmed after dark, as murders and robberies were far from uncommon. I took the precaution, therefore, to provide myself with two small pistols, which I constantly carried in my bosom.

About a month after this, I had remained later than usual, enjoying the cool night breeze, near the margin of the glorious bay, when, upon returning home through a dark and

narrow street, I perceived a tall figure issue from a house not far before me. He had not proceeded many yards ere two individuals sprang from beneath the shade of an adjoining portal, and attacked him ; but not so quickly as to prevent his placing his back against the wall in a posture of defence. In an instant, the glimmering of the moon fell upon their naked weapons. Regardless of every other consideration but that of trying to rescue the intended victim, I rushed forward, and drawing forth my pistols, bade them desist, or I would fire. The nearest bravo, nothing daunted, turned upon me with his rapier : so I pulled the trigger and he fell ; his companion seeing this, fled, upon which the stranger, thanking me for my timely succour, begged me to support him to the nearest guard-room, as he was grievously wounded ; but ere I could effect this he fainted from loss of blood. My cries and the report of my pistol, soon brought several patrol to the spot ; some of whom secured both me and the fallen assassin, whilst others carried off the wounded gentleman, who proved to be Count Vento, the admiral, to whose intercession I was indebted for my parole, and whose squadron had returned that evening to port.

After being detained some time by the police, and hearing that the fallen ruffian was a well-

known common assassin, I was permitted to return home, which I did, meditating upon the singularity of an adventure that bore such striking affinity to one of the most extraordinary incidents of my dream. The darkness and confusion had prevented my distinguishing the count's features, and I was therefore tormented with a desire to discover whether they bore any resemblance to those of the Venetian, which were so deeply engrafted in my memory. The moment for ascertaining this, soon seemed to offer itself, for, before mid-day on the following morning I was summoned to the admiral's residence, who, though in great danger, expressed a desire to see me. I lost no time in obeying, and having traversed a suite of noble apartments, was ushered into his chamber, where I only saw one other person, habited as an ecclesiastic. My eye eagerly sought to decipher the lineaments of the wounded man, but from the bed being placed in an alcove of the dimly-lighted chamber, I could scarcely distinguish a single feature. I was greatly surprised, however, when, after a few moments, he addressed me as follows, in pure English.

“Your name is Peregrine Penguin?”

“It is, sir,” replied I; “at least, that is the name I have hitherto borne.”

“May I ask,” answered he, “whether you are the son, or in any way connected with one James Penguin, formerly boatswain to the *Tara* sloop of war?”

“I am not related to him, sir, nor do I know who are my parents. He was my foster-father, however, and took charge of me, from about my third year, until he lost his life in saving a shipwrecked crew.”

“Poor fellow!” ejaculated the admiral, “he once saved my life. Providence, whose inscrutable behests no man can contemplate without bewilderment and veneration, seems to have ordained that the debt of gratitude I owed him should be increased by his foster-child. Whether I live or die, you will not find me ungrateful, although you are an Englishman. You shall speedily obtain your release, and I will send a vessel to convey you to Palermo. In the meantime my purse and palace are at your service. My good friend, father Mac Bryan, shall take charge of you.”

I was about to pour forth my thanks, when he interrupted me, observing, “You say you were Penguin’s foster-son—how came you into his hands, and why were you called *Peregrine*?”

“Such, sir, was the name he said was mine when he first brought me to his home, and such

was the appellation by which I was designated when reclaimed by the solicitors who afterwards paid for my education."

"Have you no clue to your birth?" demanded he eagerly, raising himself, and bidding me stand more towards the light.

"None, sir, although I have reason to believe that my parents, to whom Penguin was strongly attached, are persons of higher station; but my secret died with him."

The admiral now whispered something in the ear of the ecclesiastic, and the other then addressed me also in English: but with a strong Irish accent, begging I would narrate all I knew of my history. I complied, and continued without interruption, until I touched upon my connexion with Lord Toryville, when the count uttered a deep groan and sank exhausted upon his pillow. The priest flew to his assistance, called for the attendants, and desired me to wait in an outer chamber. At the expiration of an hour he re-appeared, and requested me to follow him to his own apartments, where he no sooner arrived, than walking up and down in great agitation, he exclaimed, "I fear there is little hope—malediction upon the jealousy of him that employed the vile assassins—my poor friend—good, generous, noble-minded Belmont!"

“Belmont!” ejaculated I, “Belmont! good God, sir, is that the count’s real name?”

“It is,” answered he; “a name once distinguished in his native land, and honoured in the naval annals of that country which, like a cruel step-mother, has driven so many of her best and bravest sons to seek security, freedom of conscience, and even bread, in foreign lands. But why this emotion? Is it because, with the bigoted prejudices of a protestant Englishman, you repent you of having aided a proscribed Irishman?”

“No, sir,” replied I, warmly, “I have no such ungenerous prejudices, and, thank God, there are few English who have. But I was startled by your pronouncing a name which I have long vainly endeavoured to recal—a name which I heard praised in my boyhood and—which is connected with a dream——”

“A dream!” exclaimed he, interrupting me.

“Yes, sir: but you would despise my superstition, were I to narrate the details, although a further portion of it was, in some measure, realised last night.”

“I should like to hear the particulars of a dream, which you say is connected with my poor friend. Speak then in confidence. It shall be *sub sigillo*.”

I complied, adding such subsequent incidents as related to the subject. When I had finished, he exclaimed, "You say you dreamed that Lady Eaglehurst was your mother? You recognised her portrait as that of the face you saw, and you now recollect that Belmont was the name you heard pronounced as that of your father and family?"

"Precisely, sir."

"This is marvellous!" ejaculated he, and creates strange surmises in my breast. Belmont himself has been moved in an unaccountable manner by your appearance. But have you no other circumstances to corroborate that which bears more the appearance of a heaven-sent vision than a dream?"

"None, sir: I urged Mr. Robsome——"

"Robsome!" exclaimed the ecclesiastic, putting his hand to his forehead as if to collect his memory. "Robsome! a solicitor in Lincoln's Inn?"

"The same, sir. He it is, who is charged with providing for me."

"This is a new light," replied he:—then, after some consideration, he begged me to detail the remainder of my adventures up to the latest moment. Having terminated, he asked if I was acquainted with Lady Eaglehurst's history.

“ I heard from M. de Florennes,” answered I, “ that she was the daughter of a United Irishman, married to a foreigner : that her conduct to her first husband was not without reproach, and that this conduct had accelerated his death.”

“ He is not dead !” retorted he, emphatically.

“ Not dead, sir !” exclaimed I, “ and she married to another !”

“ She is ignorant that he lives, and so are all but I. For who could recognise in the once handsome and vigorous Belmont, the worn-out, broken-hearted Capo-Vento, upon whom the frosts of premature old age have laid their icy fangs ? Hark you, young man—swear that you will never reveal a word of what I am about to say. You are yourself, perhaps, deeply interested in maintaining the secret.”

I solemnly swore to be silent as the grave, and he proceeded—“ Yes—your christian name, your extraordinary resemblance in voice and feature to Belmont’s family : your being entrusted to poor Penguin, and the very fact of Robsome being employed to provide for you, as well as the miraculous incidents of your dream, are circumstantial evidences that excite in me the utmost belief that you are Belmont’s son ;

the child of the so-styled Lady Eaglehurst. She has abjured the religion of her forefathers, and you, also, have been educated in the apostate creed. Ah !” added he frowning, “ had Penguin known that his old captain lived, he would not have reared his child in the faith of his persecutors.”

I was so surprised, so agitated between new-born hopes and long-existing apprehensions, that I was unable to speak. He spared me the trouble by resuming thus : “ The history I have to recount is briefly told. Belmont was a commander in the British navy ; one of its best and most promising officers. Keenly feeling those unjust laws which ground himself and country to the dust, he retired to Ireland, where he possessed considerable property. There he married, and eventually became connected with the United Irishmen. He joined, fought, and fell with them. He was pursued, proscribed, attainted—but escaped with his wife and child to France, where he offered his services to the republic. He was accepted, appointed to a frigate, and ordered to proceed from Toulon upon a cruise off the African coast. I accompanied him as his chaplain. After making several prizes, we had the misfortune, one night, to fall in with a British vessel of superior force. Knowing the ignomi-

nious fate that awaited him if captured, he fought with desperation: determined to sink rather than surrender. But his ship's company mutinied, and resolved, after two hours' combat, to strike. He and I, with three or four other of our countrymen, similarly situated, were allowed to lower a boat and to take our chance of reaching the coast. Favoured by the darkness and confusion, we were not discovered, but were unfortunately picked up by a Barbary pirate, sold to slavery, and reported dead. After undergoing fearful hardships for nearly two years, he and I escaped and reached Marseilles. Thence we flew to Toulon, where Mrs. Belmont and her child were left; but she had removed to Barcelona. Thither we followed, and you may judge of the agonised feelings of my friend, when he discovered that she had been recently married to Lord Toryville, who was then upon his travels, and had accompanied him to England. This intelligence, combined with previous sufferings, brought on a severe illness, and he rose, at length, from his sick bed, an aged grey-headed man in looks, but a lion still at heart."

"Did he not reclaim his wife?" demanded I.

"No!" answered the priest. "With a sentiment of noble generosity and self-abnegation.

almost incredible, he resolved not to disturb the repose of her whom he so dearly loved, and who had thus sinned from ignorance. I combated this intention from various motives, but he persisted in his resolution to renounce her for ever, and henceforth to live under a feigned name. We then returned to France; where he was again employed. Having been transferred by the king's desire to the service of this country, he has risen, through his skill and valour, to the rank, wealth, and honours, which he now enjoys."

"What efforts, sir, may I ask, did he make to ascertain the fate of his child?"

"He sent me from Barcelona to England, —a perilous mission, for a price was then upon my head. When I arrived I wrote, to Lady Toryville; she declined seeing me, and referred me to Mr. Robsome, her solicitor, who informed me that the infant was no more. I could not press the matter, or demand certificates in an authoritative manner, without revealing the secret of Belmont's existence; besides, I had no reason to question her veracity. I was compelled, therefore, to return with this painful intelligence. If, as I feel confident, you are the son of my poor friend, Heaven can alone account for conduct so unnatural, so inhuman on the part of a mother. But if Belmont authorises me,

the mystery can, with your assistance, be soon unravelled."

I had no time for observations, for father Mac Bryan was now summoned to the admiral's chamber, and I was left to meditate upon the joyful hopes which this conversation had awakened—hopes that were darkened by my fears for the life of him whom I panted to embrace as my father, and by strange conflicting sentiments towards her whom I dreaded to think of as a mother.

CHAPTER XVI.

In which there are strange conjunctions and alienations—What I fear I embrace, and what I love I am afraid of—Proving, also, that dreams do not always come by contraries, and thence bringing me to a termination.

At the expiration of three or four hours I was again summoned to the count's presence. The beams of the evening sun being now admitted more freely, my eyes eagerly turned to his features. Believe it or not, as you please, sceptical reader; they were those of the Venetian. Not stern and intolerant as I had seen them in my dream, but mild, benevolent, and full of gentle affections. A flame like that of lightning shot through my veins at that moment. I blessed my God, the common Father of all man-

kind, and I inwardly prayed for benedictions upon him whom I firmly believed to be my parent.

Much, it appears, had passed between the count and father Mac Bryan during the afternoon; for the former, whose features seemed already bedewed with the damps of approaching death, regarded me intensely for some minutes, as if communing with himself. At length he beckoned me to approach, and pointing to a footstool, bade me kneel; then placing his burning fingers upon my brow, he said, "It is—it must be so! He, in whose blessed hands are the springs of life and death, has spoken to my heart. My feelings can only result from inward sympathy and heavenly truth. Mac Bryan has told me all. We agree—you must be my son—my dear loved child, whom I left a feeble infant in its mother's arms. I fancy that I can yet trace a remnant of the same lineaments—they are those of my family. Its blood, pure as the best in Europe, speaks in each trait. I cannot doubt—I will not doubt. It is a consolation, a blessing sent to me in my last hour. Holy Virgin, I thank thee. A court of justice may demand stronger and more substantial proofs than those in our possession; those must be procured hereafter: but a father's heart requires them not. There is something

which assures me I am not deceived. Mac Bryan," added he solemnly, "here upon my death-bed, within a few hours of passing into the presence of that Almighty Judge, in whom there is neither darkness, error, nor death—here, I acknowledge this youth as my child—my only child—my heir;—when I am gone, be to him as you have been to me—a friend, a mentor, a consolation. I bequeath him to you, and you to him."

"So be it!" ejaculated the priest. Then laying one hand upon my head and raising the other to heaven, he continued, "Glory be to Him who illuminates the blind, who can alone direct our steps and guide our hearts. Son of the Belmont! descendant of a thousand chieftains, may thy father revive in thee; may the Spirit of grace shine upon thee—may the dove of peace alight upon thy young head—mayst thou live to be the champion of thy country's rights, the avenger of her wrongs, the supporter of her glorious faith."

I was so overcome that I scarcely knew what I did. I sobbed loudly, my brain was bewildered. I think I grasped the count's hand, and rose to kiss his forehead; but all I can recollect is, that he pressed me in his arms, and that I uttered the words, "Father! father! dearest

father!" in a tone of mingled joy and agony. Joy at the recovery—agony at the approaching loss.

"You spoke of the true faith, Mac Bryan," said the count, making an effort to raise himself on his pillow: "my child was baptized in that of his ancestors—but he has been reared in apostasy. This must not be. I have suffered degradation, proscription, exile, a thousand moral agonies, to support that faith—for in that faith are involved the liberties of my country. If this be my son he will not hesitate to abandon his heresy, and to return to that creed for which his forefathers have fought and suffered, and without which there can be no salvation. As you would have my blessing, as you would have my soul repose in peace, Peregrine," added he, pressing my hand, "promise to renounce the errors that have been forced upon you."

I would have given worlds if my conviction had permitted me to reply affirmatively: never was my soul more tortured with agony; I trembled to disobey, but truth, honour, an innate horror of hypocrisy, urged me to be candid. So, after a few moments' consideration, I replied, "Ask, sir, my life; ask of me to encounter the deadliest peril, to renounce the heritage you would give me; ask anything, everything but

that. I have been reared in the bosom of the English church : its doctrines, such as I understand them, are mild, pure, tolerant, full of christian charity, and if practised as good men practise them, reasonable, just, and sublime."

"You refuse," said he, interrupting me, "you glory in your apostasy. You a Belmont! you a traitor to your faith and country! better that we had not met than meeting thus."

"Pause, my friend," said the priest, interrupting him; "be not too hasty. You exact too much. You forget the force of education. You forget that the greater the error the greater the difficulty to reclaim the wanderer. Retract the unnatural thoughts that assail you. He is your son. I, a pastor of our holy faith, join upon my knees with him to implore your blessing, as you would expect that of Heaven. Let not the persecuted retort with persecution. Show tolerance to the intolerant—mercy to the unmerciful—let us conquer by good works, and not by following the examples of our enemies."

"Well! well! father," rejoined the count, "be it so. I trust in you. I trust in the workings of God's bounty."

He then laid his hands upon my head, and raising his eyes upwards, exclaimed, "Father of mercy, bless this my child; lead him in the true path, and teach him to abjure his errors."

Mac Bryan uttered a solemn amen, and, for some minutes, there was a dead silence unbroken save by my sobs. At length Belmont said, "The physicians declare that I cannot live out the day : it is time that I should hasten to settle my worldly affairs, that I may devote the remaining moments to my last preparation. Call in the notaries."

The priest obeyed, and a table being placed near the bedside, Belmont, in a cool and collected manner, dictated his last will, by which he acknowledged me as sole heir to his Italian titles and estates, as well as those under attainder in Ireland, declaring that, according to the register of the parish church of —, county —, kingdom of Ireland, I should be twenty-one upon 1st of June 181—, next ensuing, and charging his property with an annuity to Mac Bryan, whom he appointed my guardian and trustee. These formalities having been scrupulously executed, and the notaries dismissed, he told me that he had obtained my release from the king, with passports for my journey, and that I and Mac Bryan might proceed without loss of time to England, so soon as the last ceremonies had been performed over his remains.

"You will be the bearer of all my papers," added he, "and will deliver this letter to your mother. Read it."

I took the letter from his hand, and read as follows.

“ Naples, 1st Feb. 181—.

“ Start not, Sylvia Belmont, at the sight of his handwriting, whom, for nearly nineteen years, you have thought numbered with the dead, and who would have allowed you to remain in that error for ever, were it not for the sake of his child. Yes! his child, whom God has restored to him in a manner as miraculous as unexpected. That child, now grown to manhood, and rescued from misery and disgrace, not through his mother's hands, but through the interposition of divine Providence, and the aid of two benevolent men, whom the Almighty prosper and protect! that child, accompanied by my old and faithful friend, Mac Bryan, will be the bearer of this, and will enter into details which I have neither strength nor time to communicate—for the hand of death presses heavily upon me, and ere yet the ink of this paper will be dried I shall be no more. I die forgiving you, for having married Lord Eaglehurst. You knew not that I lived. I die convinced also, whatever may have been your motives for concealing your child's existence, that you will repent, and not lose a moment in fulfilling your duty towards him :

Yes ! I call upon you from the threshold of the grave—I summon you in the name of God, of nature, of your own salvation, to render him that justice which you have so long, so unnaturally, so unaccountably withheld. To spare you shame, to save you from disgrace, I have sought, by every means, to conceal from the world that the husband of Sylvia Belmont still lived. But the moment for tearing off the veil is arrived. Remember that it is a husband and a child who demand justice from a wife and mother. Spare my son, and me, through him, the misery of exposing you. If, in abjuring the religion of your forefathers, you have not renounced all faith in divine retribution ; if your conscience and heart be not steeled against nature, lose not a moment in fulfilling that duty without which the remainder of your life will be accursed. Our son, Peregrine Belmont, Count Capo-Vento, hitherto known as Peregrine Penguin, is heir to my titles and estates. I have solemnly acknowledged him. It alone remains for you to ratify this acknowledgment, and, if the persecutors of unhappy Ireland have a spark of justice left, they will listen to the exertions you will doubtless make to place him in possession of his attainted property. It is with my dying breath, under the penalty of eternal male-

diction, that I once more summon you to execute my last bequests. But my hand trembles, my strength fails. The damps of death moisten this sheet. Adieu ! As you conduct yourself towards my child, so may the Almighty deal with you. Adieu, for ever !

“ PEREGRINE BELMONT,
COUNT CAPO-VENTO.”

Alas ! the exertions my poor father had made, produced the results feared by his attendants. Shortly after this he was seized with fearful spasms, to which succeeded a brief repose. The last succours of the church were solemnly administered and piously received. In a few minutes more, convulsion and tetanus ensued, and, ere midnight, he breathed his last in the arms of Mac Bryan and myself.

I will not attempt to depict the state of my feelings ; they were intense beyond all expression. If I had never for a moment been separated from his living body, I could not have suffered greater agony than when I was torn from his breathless corpse. No son, who had lived from childhood beneath the shadow of a parent's love, could have mourned more bitterly, more sincerely than I did, when the tolling of the city bells, and the booming echoes of the cannon of

St. Elmo, and the fleet, announced to the Neapolitans that the murdered remains of the admiral were committed to their last repository, in the vaults of the Chiesa di S. Gennaro.

A few days were passed in preparations for my return to England, and in fruitless endeavours to trace out the instigators and cause of my father's murder, which were, however, attributed to the jealousy of a Neapolitan officer. At length Mac Bryan having settled all my affairs, and placed a trustworthy steward in possession of the palace and estates, which I might now call my own, we started towards the German frontier, and having reached Cuxhaven, embarked, and arrived safely at Harwich. Four months had elapsed since I had quitted England. I had received no letters, and it was not, therefore, without a beating heart that I drove up to Mr. Figmat's abode, and, springing from the vehicle ere the post-boy could dismount, rapped at the door, bidding Mac Bryan proceed to a hotel in Albemarle-street. In a few seconds my old friend Simon appeared, in deep mourning. The truth struck me in a moment; the hand of death had been busy, also, here. My kind, my generous benefactor was no more.

"The ladies are in the drawing-room, sir," said Simon, as soon as he recovered from his sur-

prise, "and, bless me—hadn't I better call Jessy Groves, and let her tell Miss Sophy, for she has been out of her mind like, and the doctors thought she'd have followed old master."

Before I could reply, a door upon the landing-place opened. I recognised the well-known footsteps—I bounded forward, and, in a moment more, I pressed the fainting form of Sophia to my heart; her mother and Jessy soon came to her assistance, with mingled surprise and alarm depicted on their countenances. A few brief sentences explained the cause of my return, and change of position; but when Sophia recovered I had the inexpressible joy to find that she remained unchanged. The rest of the evening was passed in mutual recapitulations of all that had occurred since our separation. My letters had never reached them, though they had heard of the brig's capture. They had not written to me, for they knew not where I was: but, all seemed to be forgotten in the joy of meeting, and it may be unnecessary to add, that if Mrs. Figmat was well disposed to ratify the promise of her husband to his poor clerk—she was not the less inclined to do so to Peregrine Belmont. Human nature, amidst its gravest combats, is always inclined to show itself in its true colours. Mrs. Figmat's views were not

untinctured with ambition, and the pride that springs from wealth ; I could, therefore, scarcely refrain from smiling, when I heard her ejaculate, “ Well, my dear Sophy, I always said that our movements would one day appear in the Post—only think of your being an Italian countess.”

Midnight struck ere I quitted Lothbury to rejoin Mac Bryan : before we retired to rest, it was determined that we should seek an immediate interview with Lady Eaglehurst, who had returned to England with Lord Toryville a short time after our departure. I wished to write and announce our intention, but my guardian would not consent. “ No !” said he, “ she merits no such attention at your hands. She has abandoned you in a manner unheard of in the annals of maternal cruelty. We must appear before her suddenly, and confound her, ere she has time for preparation or subterfuge.”

“ Merciless as her conduct has been to me,” replied I, “ it is impossible to forget that she is my mother.”

“ You have a sacred duty to perform,” rejoined he, “ this must be accomplished : it is in her power, perhaps, still to rob you of your birth-right. You have to deal with an artful and heartless woman : let her be just towards you, and I shall be the first to urge forgiveness, and filial respect.”

I continued to make many objections, but they were overruled ; therefore, on the following forenoon, we presented ourselves at Lord Eaglehurst's house, and having stated that we had important business, were shortly ushered into the countess's boudoir. Never shall I forget the look of terror, the thrilling scream, which burst from her, when fixing her eye upon me and exclaiming, "Belmont ! Belmont !" she sank senseless on the floor.

"That exclamation is sufficient : nature and conscience have betrayed her ; it proves your resemblance to your father," ejaculated Mac Bryan, as he hastened with me to raise her, and to apply such restoratives as were at hand.

I was agitated in a most painful manner, but my companion retained all his self possession. In a few minutes she regained her senses—after staring wildly around, and putting her hands to her eyes, she said, "Was it a dream ? Did I see him or not ? Mac Bryan, you here ! Has the grave rendered back its prey ? Who is this that stands before me, such as Belmont was when we last parted ?"

"This madam," rejoined my guardian, "is your son, the living image of your deceased husband. This is the pilot's foster child ; the work-house orphan ; the innocent accused ; the mer-

chant's clerk, whom you have so cruelly forsaken;—he is here to demand his birthright, and to receive that justice from you which, within the last month, he obtained from his father, Peregrine Belmont.”

“Belmont alive within the month!” retorted she, her lips quivering, and an ashy paleness overspreading her features; “alive! good God, what crime have I been guilty of!”

“One to him for which God and man will forgive you, and one to this, your child, that it is in your power to redeem forthwith,” answered Mac Bryan, earnestly.

“What mystery is this? do not agonise my heart—does Belmont live?” replied she: “blast me not with the weight of double guilt!”

“Read this,” responded Mac Bryan, presenting to her my father's letter. She hesitated awhile, and then tore the seal. I watched with nervous anxiety the changing flushes of her countenance, as she followed the well-known traces of my father's pen. Thank thee, O Providence! thank thee, almighty Controller of the human heart!—the triumph of good over evil was rapid and effectual. Ere she came to the last words, the paper dropped from her hands: she gazed at me for a moment, staggered forward, cast herself upon my shoulder, and, utter-

ing the words, "My son ! my son ! my injured child, have mercy on me !" pressed me in her arms in an agony of sorrow and remorse.

In that dear, ecstatic moment, all was forgotten and forgiven by me,—every suffering was repaid tenfold. "Mother ! mother ! beloved mother !" answered I, "your secret shall be sacred. I ask no more—I am contented. I will abandon all sooner than cause you a moment's suffering."

"My husband's last commands shall be obeyed," answered she : "I am a wretch unworthy of pity or commiseration. Peregrine, child of my early love, you shall have full and ample reparation. Here," added she, seizing a pen and paper, and tracing a few lines, read this. She gave me the note, and I read.

"Hanover Square.

"Sir,—It is a duty I owe to myself and my child, to declare thus solemnly and unequivocally, that the boy, who, I have constantly assured you, was the natural son of a lady of high rank, entrusted to my charge, is *my own son* by my first husband, Captain Belmont. It is superfluous for me to enter into details, nor have I heart to do so at this moment; but, if necessary for my son's interests, I shall be prepared

to substantiate his claims to his father's attainted property before the proper tribunal. I wish to see you as soon as possible.

“SYLVIA EAGLEHURST.”

She then rang the bell, and, before Mac Bryan or I could utter a word, she directed a servant to carry her note to Mr. Robsome.

It would be tedious were I to repeat the conversations that subsequently ensued. It suffices to say, that I was made happy beyond my most sanguine hopes, and that nothing was left unsaid by Mac Bryan to tranquillise my mother's mind as to the criminality in which she had involved herself by her double marriage. It was our wish, also, to have spared her the anguish of accounting for her conduct to me; but she insisted upon avowing all, which she did nearly in these words.

“I thought your father dead, and mourned him nearly two years. I was living in great misery at Barcelona, under the feigned name your father had assumed, and, for economy, placed you with a Spanish nurse. Chance threw Lord Toryville in my way, and I quickly perceived that I had made an impression upon his heart. My ambition, my hopes, were excited, and I thought if I could succeed in cap-

tivating him, that I might restore myself to fortune and rank. Hearing him continually speak with virulence and acrimony against Ireland and its religion, and declare the most undisguised hostility against the rebels who had murdered one of his kinsmen in a barbarous manner, my poverty, my ambition, my fear of losing him, inspired me with the idea of concealing my country, my family, and religion. I therefore passed myself off as an American orphan, the widow of a naval officer of the United States, and said that I had come to Spain to endeavour to trace out some relatives of my family, as those of my husband had cast me off. I further added that I was of the same religion as himself; and, hearing him declare that if he ever remarried it should not be with any woman having children, I also concealed from him your existence. My arts and deceit succeeded; I was believed—beloved,—and, before quitting Barcelona, the uncompromising, high-church Eaglehurst, then Lord Toryville, one of the bitterest adversaries of Irish liberties, was married to the Catholic widow of the attainted Belmont. Having once plunged myself into the gulf I dreaded to reveal the truth;—I knew that he might perhaps pardon my having a son, but I felt convinced that he would never forgive my

deception, and that he would loath me for my treachery, falsehood, and unnatural conduct to you. Thus, torn between the agonies of maternal remorse and the dread of discovery, I suffered torments that cannot be described. At length, I determined to send for you privately to England, and to watch over you, unknown to Lord Toryville. Mr. Robsome, who had been recommended to me for his integrity and high character, was selected as my agent; so, upon your arrival, I sent for him, framed the deception alluded to in my note, and desired, if inquiries should be made, to deny your existence. I next sought for the boatswain Penguin, of whose attachment to my husband I had often heard. He came to town—I saw him, and told him that you were the child of his old captain, but that it was essential that the secret should be strictly guarded, until such time as your real name and birth could be declared. It was not difficult to work upon his simple mind, and he accepted the charge with readiness. wishing to interest Lord Toryville in your favour, I subsequently told him a story, somewhat similar to that by which I imposed upon Mr. Robsome: he believed me, and even applauded my kindness. It was his wish to have invited you to Hawthorn Castle; but, dreading the effect of

seeing you, I resisted, saying that I thought we had done enough for you, and that it was the desire of your mother that you should be sent to India. You know the rest; but you do not know that my heart has been a living sepulchre. It is time to relieve my conscience: Lord Eaglehurst must know all. This avowal must be the first commencement of that life of penitence and mortification to which I shall henceforth devote myself."

Mac Bryan, who was much affected by my mother's words and manner, endeavoured, with many pious and moral arguments, to dissuade her from her purpose, and to pour comfort into her heart; whilst I added a thousand assurances of filial tenderness and devotion. But nothing could alter her determination; far from it, she sent for Lord Toryville and Lady Delphine, and, as soon as the first emotion of surprise and mutual rejoicings had passed between us, she made an agonizing confession to them of the whole truth, and firmly declared her resolution of retiring, for the rest of her days, into a convent. This determination, in despite of our united endeavours, she put into execution within less than three weeks. Not, however, without demanding an audience of the Prince Regent, and receiving from him an

assurance that the attainder upon my property should be raised. The gracious Prince accompanied this boon with many kind and generous expressions.

Having brought down my adventures thus far, and shown the singular manner in which various incidents of my dream were realized, I have only to add, that, as soon as our mourning terminated, Sophia and I were united. Some twenty years or more have passed since that auspicious day, and I may venture to affirm that the amiable character and virtues of the merchant's daughter have rendered her an ornament to her rank and station, and have converted my life into a prolonged dream of happiness. The benevolent, the exemplary Rightford has long joined his sainted wife in those regions of bliss, to which an uninterrupted course of piety and goodness so richly entitled him. The French restoration soon followed my return to England, and reinstated De Florennes in the honours that he had previously enjoyed. Lady Delphine conferred her hand upon the young guardsman, and with it a handsome fortune, made over to her by her generous brother, who has succeeded to his father's titles, and remains unmarried. As for myself in despite of my good guardian's efforts,

I have continued steadfast in my adherence to the established church, but no less steadfast in advocating the cause of religious freedom in voting in the House of Commons, of which I am a member, upon every question which can contribute to the welfare and enfranchisement of my Catholic fellow countrymen. But it is time to bid the reader farewell.

“And what became of Martin?” said my editor, laying down his spectacles—“did he meet his fate with the same hardened firmness, the same reckless courage that he evinced when you left him in Newgate?”

“No—the force of conscience eventually triumphed. His defence, or rather admission of his crimes, was conducted in a manner that astounded the court. It was replete with the finest classic allusions, and the sublimest moral and philosophical arguments, hideously distorted. His courage, at first, seemed to augment with the approach of danger, and he stood, like Satan, glorying in, rather than denying, his crimes.. But when the jury unhesitatingly returned their verdict, when the judge put on the black symbol of condemnation, his features were blanched, his whole frame quivered, and he sank overwhelmed into the arms of the turnkeys. He was removed in this state to his cell, and there

abandoned himself, not to remorse, but to the most frightful terrors. The brief space between his sentence and death must have been worse than a whole life of torture. From the moment of quitting the court, to that of mounting the scaffold, he exhibited all the agonies of a guilty mind; the racks of a thousand hells appeared to agonize him;—in a word, he had lived a remorseless monster, he died a conscience-stricken coward.

THE END.

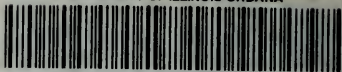
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